



THE
wire

January 1986 £1.20 \$2.95 issue 23

SINGERS!

CELIA CRUZ

ANITA O'DAY

DONALD BANKS

BILL LASWELL

WRAP
YOUR



FISH
IN
NOTHING
LESS.

NME

EVERY WEDNESDAY 45p.

NEWS	4
ARTO LINDSAY	6 David Illic
LIVEWIRE	8
CELIA CRUZ	12 Sue Steward
DONALD BANKS	16 David Toop
CHARLIE WATTS	19 Richard Cook
LOOSE TUBES	20 Stuart Nicholson
MATHILDE SANTING	22 Richard Cook
PHOTO COMPETITION	
RESULTS	24
CONTEMPORARY	
CLASSICAL	26 Max Harrison
ZWERIN	27 Mike Zwerin
PLAYLIST	27
ANITA O'DAY	28 Will Friedwald
BILL LASWELL	30 Mark Sinker
ALAN BUSH	36 Brian Morton
LPS OF THE YEAR	38 Everybody
SOUNDCHECK	40
BOOKS	53
JAZZWORD	54 Tim Colwell
THE JAZZ VAMPIRES	54 Simon Cooper
THE WRITE PLACE	55
NEXT MONTH	58



CONTENTS

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NEWS

an editor's idea

HERE IT is – just another year up for grabs. Our resolution this year: we promise to try and keep the Next Month Box accurate. So far, it's looking good.

Some of you may grumble at the lack of 'jazz' in this issue. It's true that our features list is short on mainstream boppers this time, but Wire's global grip must extend beyond the usual licks. Next month, in any event, is shaping up as much more of a jazz-based issue. Down with uniformity!

Let us all wish ourselves spiritual prosperity in 1986.

Richard Cook



The Wire team wish you a good new year: (L to R) Lorraine, Jayne, Joanne, Chris, Richard, Paul and Chris.

big bucks for hammersmith

THE RIVERSIDE Studios Hammersmith has received the substantial donation of £10,000 towards its Visual Arts programme for 1986. The receipt of this first donation will be used as a challenge for similar bodies or businessmen to join in securing the future of Riverside. The donation was given by the Swiss-based Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.

the joy of sax!

A NEW venture in Jazz Education will be launched soon in Brighton. Bobby Wellins, one of Britain's leading jazz improvisers, will be giving a course of sax lessons and Ron Parry will be doing the same with drums. Duration of the courses is ten weeks and the venue is the Brighton Music School (0273 606501).

Furthermore, it is planned to engage other well-known jazz players as the demand grows so that specialist tuition will be available for all instruments. Those interested in applying should call the aforementioned number for the relevant forms.

touring without tears

THE ARTS Council is offering *Survival Tactics* For Touring, a unique one-day course covering every aspect of planning a tour – from admin, to choosing venues and advance publicity. Closing date for applications is 3 January – ring Anne Murch on 01-629 9495 for more info.



Nina

Pharoah

pharoah holds court at ronnie's

MIGHTY REEDMAN Pharoah Sanders plays a rare season at Ronnie Scott's Club this month – for two weeks from 6 January. Then Nina Simone takes over for a three-week residency from 20 January (advance tickets for this one).

south banking on blue note

LWT'S ARTS programme *The South Bank Show* will present a profile of Blue Note records in its edition of 19 January. Alongside archive clips there'll be interviews with Horace Silver, McCoy Tyner, Alfred Lion, Wayne Shorter, Reid Miles and (if he doesn't end up on the cutting room floor) our own Richard Cook.

irakere on spool

A 60-minute video featuring Irakere in performance at Ronnie Scott's is to be released next month. The video, produced by David Glyn and Sue Steward, includes six live numbers along with an interview with the band. More details on price and stockists next month.

facelift for corner house

THE CORNER House, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne where there is local jazz and blues five nights a week and where Jazz North East Ltd. have presented around 100 'name' events through the 1980s, closes its doors in January – but only for a brief period, to open with an extended, refurbished concert room, with an extra 40% capacity which will greatly extend the range of jazz activity. A special opening event is being planned.

bass clef's late-night jam sessions take off

A FREQUENT question from visiting jazz musicians and younger jazz players is "Where can we go to have a play?" Despite the number of jazz venues in London and the increase in jazz education courses offered, the opportunities for sitting-in or jamming are few and far between. In this respect the late-night Wednesday jam sessions at the Bass Clef (35 Coronet Street, N1) are a boon to the scene. They start at 12.30am (after the gig) and during January will be hosted by Dill Katz & Co. MU members are admitted FREE to the club after midnight and receive a discount on admission before midnight.



STUART NICHOLSON

compo up for grabs

MULTI-TALENTED jazz violin and bass player Peter Compo is planning a six-month European jaunt next spring. Anyone wishing to book Compo should call New York (212) 228 0096. He already has a selection of dates here but is available for more.



Peter Compo

stamp duty for the duke

THE UNITED States Post Office honours a contributor to the Arts each year by gracing a postage stamp with their likeness. Contenders for 1986 were whittled down to Laurel and Hardy or Duke Ellington – the Duke won, so now is the time to get yourself an American penpal!



Duke:
in for a
licking

amm, tippett, parker

TWO DATES, for improvising: AMM are at Oxford St Pauls on 10 January, and Evan Parker & Keith Tippett duet at Nottingham Clarendon College on 29 January.

sheila jordan at bass clef

A RARE visit by vocalist Sheila Jordan is one of the highlights of January's programmes at London's Bass Clef. Her only London appearance is at the club on the 22nd. Other dates for this month include the London debut of Jim Mullen's new band featuring Iain Ballamy (12), Clark Tracey's CT3+2 (16), a duo by Stan Tracey and Tony Coe (26), and The Guest Stars (28).

the bryce is right

JAZZ COURSES run by Owen and Iris Bryce are to be held at Denman College Oxfordshire in the spring. Some courses are for members only, although the majority are open to anyone.

There will also be a one-day jazz course in Basic Improvisation at Blisworth Village Hall Northampton on Sat 18 Jan. Applications to Owen Bryce, 58 Pond Bank, Blisworth NN7 3EL. The fee is £10 for the day including morning coffee and afternoon tea.

e.t. in the flesh

EJE THELIN, renowned Swedish jazz trombonist, is planning an extensive tour in 1986 with an international band of musicians – the working title being "ET Project". Amongst other musicians being recruited by Thelin is Marilyn Mazur, who has just completed work with Miles Davis, and the final line-up will consist of seven or eight other notables.

important notice!

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE... If you wish news to be placed in The Wire the deadlines must be met. So all club dates/news/info etc for the FEBRUARY issue should be on my desk NO LATER THAN MONDAY 5th JAN. and material for the MARCH issue, NO LATER THAN MONDAY 3rd FEB.



Evan blows it



PETER ANDERSON



ARTO LINDSAY

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN NEW YORK

SOME 36 hours to the British live debut of his *Ambitious Lovers*, and Arto Lindsay has got some time to kill. A couple of interviews and a photo session to do, and that trip down King's Road for a pair of shoes will take care of Saturday; then there's the band meeting on the day, the gig in the evening... Oh, and there's possibly one more interview before flying out on Monday afternoon. *NME*, I hear, may be interested – if they like the gig. Lindsay's geniality turns to faint sarcasm: "God, I hope we passed the audition!"

On stage, those 36 hours later, there's no apologising, no mocking. The music, in the main, comes loud and fast. Peter Scherer's electric keyboards etch out the melody from amidst the gnarled, hyper-tense and largely improvised exchanges of Lindsay's guitar and bassist Melvin Gibbs, ultimately checked by the ferocious polyrhythmic underbelly of drummer Al Mack and Latin percussionist Ricardo Torrez. Polemical, rather than prudent, *The Ambitious Lovers* are amongst the most striking inhabitants of the house that Punk built.

Lindsay cut his teeth in the No New York scene emerging out of CBGB's second wave. But like avant-funkster/bassist-turned-producer Bill Laswell, and free improviser John Zorn, Lindsay is an iconoclast. Bridging the gap between orthodoxy and the avant-garde, he's something more than your proverbial one-chord wonder.

En route to Berlin, the current five-piece *Lovers* carried more in the way of customary instrumental baggage than Lindsay first envisaged.

"My original idea was to have no traps, or keyboards... just a Brazilian rhythm section and a DJ. I met a few guys, but nothing really came of it... for economic reasons mainly. Those guys were not really willing to start making no money – and the trouble is that most of them have since faded away. It's like their strategy failed".

Lindsay further lost out following the recording of the Editions EG-released *Envy* last year, the first evidence of the *Lovers'* brand of culture-clash. Touring has meant his former band of illegal aliens having to stay put; yet the influence of Brazilian music remains strong. For Lindsay, it's the connection with his infant and teenage years of life in Brazil – and with many of the country's postpers like Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso out to make it worldwide. New York is itself shaking to the Latin quarter. Even stranger is how Reagan's

foreign policies are helping it on its way. Lindsay points to the Cuban missile crisis, when bossa nova held sway on the dancefloors. "Now, like Nicaragua's happening, salsa and samba are becoming more popular."

As with Arto's other platforms – the no-wave jazzers The Lounge Lizards, and impro-funk outfit The Golden Palominos – *The Ambitious Lovers* are informed by New York's whole wealth of contrasts – polarities from either side of the city.

"DNA (Lindsay's first major group, with Japanese drummer Ikue Mori and performance artist Tim Wright) was like an attempt to impose non-musical structure on music – like we'd take a sentence and come up with rhythms for each part... and then try to make them stick... – exploring crude avant-garde compositions, and yet still within the confines of the club circuit: "Places like CBGB's where there were people out there to get fucked, or get drunk... they couldn't give a shit about the music, so you just had to get in there and do battle with them."

The punk scene of latter '70s New York was "a musical scene... more so than in Britain where it seemed like more of a social thing... like there was a whole generation of kids all ready to go nuts..."

"And it was a lonely scene too. And while we had our scene going on downtown, the Bronx came up with something which was conceptually hipper – in other words 'fuck making music, let's take some asshole's record and do my thing with it'..."

BUT it's life downtown that shapes Lindsay's development; that spawned an on-going involvement with NY cultist-catalyst Kip Hanrahan, which led him into free improvisation, alongside such wildcards as reeds player Zorn and drummer David Moss; and which provided the platform for the short-lived Golden Palominos – an ambitious coupling of funk players and free improvisers. In on the act were Moss, Laswell and Zorn, Ornette's bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma, Curlew guitarist Nicky Skopelitis, and Henry Cow co-founder Fred Frith – Lindsay co-produced with his then regular partner of drummer Anton Fier.

"I always fancied checking funk out in some way... particularly at the bass/drums level... seeing how far you could go off the beat and still keep people dancing – which is what I have going right now. But *The Palominos* never really took it out...

DAVID ILLIC, talks to *tious Lovers* the *Ambitious Lovers* master of an avantist Lindsay, way. Arto noise, any-alarming makes an Well, he

you could never stop the goddam beat for half-a-bar, you know, and it just ended up that the improvising was laid on top."

For its time though, their album for Celluloid was important; in some ways more so now as the scene in and around New York blands-out.

"The scene is not that hot for any new bands right now... what's happening is this very slow process of different genres checking each other out. A lot of what's coming out sounds pasted together though... nothing's kinda fused – that's gonna take more time."

"The whole scene's a lot different to what it was five years ago – and the same with Art. Like then, terrorists were the idols of the artist – it was a much heavier time... more ambitious. Now you've got Reaganomics, the young are so much more career-orientated, and very consumer-happy."

So what is coming out of the lull?

"That lack of excitement breeds excitement. Things are getting rough, you know, and the people who can't have TVs, wear designer jeans and all that stuff are gonna get mad and they'll do something about it."

"Musically, there are projects which are getting stronger. I'm particularly into Zorn's work – he's totally different to all those free improvisers – that's like one thing that's happened, and he's trying to go a step beyond that... like organising the improvisation. He's more of a composer really. Zorn got me into playing with these guys – and I love it – but a lot of them will never get beyond free playing."

So why did Lindsay get involved with that?

"It was so totally different to anything else I was doing. A lot of my friends were getting really tight-arsed, so I deliberately went out to play with almost anybody."

With Zorn, Lindsay is penning the music to an opera based around the texts of NY theatre director Richard Forman; with Peter Scherer, the score for one of Kokoschka's impressionist plays. But still it's *The Ambitious Lovers* which hogs the foreground.

"Part of the reason for doing *Envy* was to communicate with my teenage idols in Brazil – to say 'look what you showed me'. Some of them have heard it and loved it."

Lindsay wears a child-like gleam. That may be the most important bridge he's built. For the rest of us, it's only one of many.

LIVEWIRE

■ SUN RA ARKESTRA Brixton The Fridge

IN THE midst of a Brixton, still nursing the scars of its latest rebellion, lies The Fridge. A dark cavernous space with a decor of dead TVs, hangings endowed with flying phalli and what looked like cats (!) bound and hung from the ceiling, was a strange yet tackily appropriate landing site for Sun Ra and his Arkestra.

After borrowing a second drumkit and missing a soundcheck, the members of the Arkestra, casually modelling their quipped headgear and padded vests, took their respective places for their anarchic inter-galactic assault. Trombones and trumpets shook the house, James Jackson's Thunder drum dumbled into life, Philly's answer to Isadora Duncan, June Tyson, wailed a selection of Ra's lyrics ("History, History... Mystery, Mystery...") and right on cue, sporting a wolfskin hat and a synthetic leopard-skin cape, came Mythology himself - Ra.

The battle was on, the Arkestra versus a sound engineer swimming in a sea of fourteen fiercely articulate and innovative musicians. Exasperating feedback fused with incompetent mixing that ironically accentuated the surreal character of the music. But neither the Ra posse nor the audience were to be deterred, and each twist and turn in the Arkestra's diverse dictionary of sound was met with rapturous approval.

Those who've clocked Ra's other appearances here will be familiar with the Arkestra's onstage theatrics, the gladiatorial combat between baritone sax and trombone or the out to lunch "Mack The Knife", and may express some disappointment at the superficial sameness of the set. However, Ra's audience seems to get younger by the year and to them it seemed there was nothing these cats couldn't play.

In three hours of music there were countless mind-snapping moments. The wizened Marshall Allen never failed to mesmerise with sweet lyricism spiced with devastating attacks on his alto, and when the foreman, John Gilmore, put down his drum sticks to launch into a stratospheric tenor sax solo a wave of disbelief ensued. Ra's music is steeped in his own jazz heritage. He nonchalantly switched from eccentric, atmospheric synthesised doodlings to rolling boogie woogie piano and when they hit that quirky, butt-twitchin' funk groove, it was the athletic, R & B tenor of Arthur O'Neil that stole the show. A new face in the ensemble, O'Neil was greeted with wild enthusiasm and Ra himself hovered over the man's saxophone bell, smiling wistfully as he nudged his solo into a different gear.

Over a whirlpool of percussion, the wacky, climactic big band arrangements collided with eulogies to travelling the spaceways or to "pink clouds" over the Nile, and if you were willing to concede that Space is THE place and climb on board

the Mothership, then this was the session for you.

Paul Bradshaw

■ STANLEY JORDAN London Shaw Theatre

WITH HIS Blue Note album notching up phenomenal sales, Stanley Jordan, the latest wunderkind of the electric guitar, breezed into London for his U.K. debut at the Shaw Theatre. In his wake he left the guitar-playing fraternity close to despair and the rest of his audience suitably dazzled by a full frontal of his unique "hammering-on" technique. Most players spend a lifetime mastering their instrument before harbouring even the most tentative thoughts of innovation, but this remarkable 25 year-old has simultaneously devised and taught himself a complex system of playing that is supported by a theory that substitutes numbers for chord permutations, intervals and tones which correspond to his retuned "Travis Bean Custom" guitar.

His acappella concert was in many ways a demonstration of his new technique. On a twelve bar blues he played the bass line and accompanying chords with his left hand, leaving his right hand free to extemporise. Complex lines an octave, fifth or even a third apart chase each other up and down the fretboard, figures in canon drifted in and out of focus and long, breathless runs with the right hand were backed by comping with the left. As no upward or downward strokes of the pick (or fingers) are required, the speed of execution is at first stunning.

All this seems a small step for Jordan, whose convivial presentation was rather like having a few friends around in his front room, but it is a giant step for the guitar-playing kind. But when the surface gloss is peeled back, there stands revealed technical imperfections and caveats about his style that keep him at arm's length as a jazz musician. Technical imperfections can be ironed out, of course, such as the occasionally mis-struck notes, but more difficult to correct is an inexact sense of time. Rhythmic flat spots occur when he tries to cram too many notes into the basic pulse, which when filled to overflowing upsets his tempo. He will tacitly acknowledge the worst moments by pulling back into rubato, so as to regroup his ideas and then pick up tempo; such are the perils of the solo performance.

It's certainly clear that "hammering-on" for Stanley Jordan means playing a plethora of notes when one or none would do. Embellishments appear at every nook and cranny that substitute linear flash for harmonic subtlety. The vehicles he uses to deploy his technique are very often harmonically slow moving, such as "Wave", "Summertime", "Eleanor Rigby" and his own composition "All the Children" and are filled to bursting with rococo runs in the gratuitous manner of Art Tatum. By playing on the guitar's

fretboard, and thus away from the instrument's pickups, his tone is thin, and his fast, high-tech runs irresistibly bring to mind Les Paul's "Lover", with its solo guitar recorded at double speed.

Already Jordan has expressed interest in sound recording and it's possible that this side of the music business may ultimately absorb him. If he decides to pursue a career as a performer, then the jazz world, I suspect, will not be mesmerised for too long by innovation and technique alone.

Stuart Nicholson

■ ANTHONY BRAXTON QUARTET Manchester Royal Northern College of Music

THIS WAS quite a gig albeit, as Coleman might have said (I mean David, not Ornette) one of two halves. The first was an absolute blinder. Braxton went through his whole line-up - flute, soprano, alto, tenor and clarinet; Crispell, Dresser and Hemingway collaborating to produce an extraordinary range of dynamics, sounds and tempos. Hemingway was particularly brilliant, playing a basic kit with sticks, brushes, beaters, bow, even bare hands with an almost manic precision. Dresser too, switching constantly from bow to fingers and back, provided a groundswell of imaginative nuances. Crispell though seemed a mite peripheral. Hunched over the keyboard, rather anxiously awaiting Braxton's cues, she seemed almost hemmed in by the constraints of her written part. When she did get her master's nod she took off like a greyhound into solos of impressive vitality.

I'm not sure how much of the first half was written. The musicians certainly brought out manuscript but they seemed to have struck a nice balance between composition and improvisation. That was, perhaps, the music's strength - an



Braxton:
cool!

ALAN TITMUS

awareness of structure without, Crispell apart, it becoming stultic. For the second half they had wads of music and the first quarter of an hour was frankly tedious. Braxton blew 13 to the dozen on soprano and the others played the notes but it was very one-dimensional and spiritless until Braxton and Crispell laid out.

A wonderfully inventive and emphatic duet of bass and drums followed, Dresser eventually leaving Hemingway to pivot the whole evening on one cymbal and a stick before Braxton returned to play a beautiful alto passage against the cymbal's obligato. At a nod Crispell took it up too. Dresser added some edgy harmonics and the kinetics gradually expanded until, quite suddenly, the whole quartet changed to straight ahead, spine-tapping mainstream. Braxton blew a blistering solo which Crispell matched, her rhythm section making stylish time, like a relatively conventional trio. A momentary return to written parts and it was over.

A classic of concentrated, subtle, crafted play. I only wish there'd been more there to see it, to encourage the RNCM to stage more of the like and rid the Opera Theatre of its hush-toned ambience. And how I wished we'd been allowed some 'extra time'!

Steve Lewis

■ GEORGE BENSON London Wembley Arena

SOME MORE showbiz for us to come to grips with. The argument over Benson's selling out has grown so wearisome that I'm coming to enjoy the brazen commerciality of his current stance – let the guy earn in peace. But sometimes George is his own worst enemy.

Like when he does impersonations. I could take Nat Cole because that's more an affectionate nod to a great man's style; but when Benson dons dark glasses and slurs his way through a Ray Charles pastiche, it's awful. And why bother, when his own pipes have grown so authoritative? Benson's singing is far beyond the point of being an appendage to his work with the plectrum. Material like "Give Me The Night", "Turn Your Love Around" and "Lady Love Me" is emotionally bankrupt but alive with George's enthusiasm for the music. As glib and self-satisfied as these songs are, Benson has grasped perfectly their certain supple glamour. He gives them the works.

Even so, one wishes the instrument would come off its stand a little more. Christ, he's a brilliant guitarist! Two numbers were all he'd allow as a 'jazz' interlude in the evening's work, and over a professionally funky backdrop (Benson employs a large band to help him out, and they're good – he can afford it, after all) the guitar practically sings. He can curl off all the little parts of his style – the hard-bitten phrase ends, octave runs and somersaulting melodic filigree – in a flow that lives out the word 'effortless'. It seems like he's just breathing it all out. Then he puts his guitar down and goes back to the microphone.

Showbiz, as I say, and it sometimes gets tiresome. The version of "On Broadway" on *Weekend in LA* is a classic of small-combo funk; here, George blows it up into a morass of showstopper clichés. There is



The Sun has got his hat on



ALAN TITMUS

*Jordan getting
it in the neck*



a lot of that, mixed in with genuine exuberance and some assertively fine playing. Enough is given to make you want to stick by Benson, and enough is wasted to make you wish his audience would ask a bit more of him.

Richard Cook

■ PHILIP MORRIS SUPERBAND London Dominion

SOMETIMES I think this will be the way of all jazz music: respectful bands, polite audiences, good tailoring and good manners. It suits some people: Milt Jackson, for instance, whose quartet set was as lucid as he always is. I don't think Milt could play badly, but of late he's learned to play as if he weren't actually playing. There is the elegance, the fastidious swing... it floats away without a trace. Perhaps he should think of something harder to play than Ahmad Jamal's "Night Mist" or the wretched

Arts Council to contribute to the D.H. Lawrence Centenary Festival, fully justified their enviable reputations for producing work of great originality with this piece of music-theatre based on Lawrence's poem, *The Ass*. The action follows D.H.L., played by Stephen Boxer, ruminating in a Sicilian cafe on the various manifestations of the ass. As beast of burden, slave to its own sexuality ("Poor ass, like man, always in rut... his head gone heavy with the knowledge of desire and humiliation") and, inevitably, Christ-carrier ("the first burden on the first beast of burden"), the ass is clearly a potent source of symbol and myth, but the Westbrooks' piece, like the poem, deals with these riches lightly and entertainingly.

The music, on an impressive array of instruments played by five talented individuals (the Westbrooks, Trevor Allan, Lesia Melynk and Peter Whymann), follows the many moods of the poem with deceptive ease and the result is a splendid and arresting entertainment, lively and

■ ARDITTI STRING QUARTET Almeida Theatre London

(*Quartets* by Fernyehough, Sorenson, Dench, Redgate, Nyman, Wittenbach, Sandstrom, Bryars, Reynolds, Hubler, Rasmussen, Cappelli, Heyn, Souster, Eliasson, Dusapin, Finnissy, Grosskopf, Rihm.)

IT WAS perhaps inevitable that much of the advance publicity for this Sunday evening series should have centred on the new amplified Raad instruments being used for the first time by the Arditti. Interesting and elegant as they are, their presence deflected deserved attention from the more extraordinary aspects of the series.

In four two-and-a-half-hour concerts, inside a month, the Quartet gave two world, one London and 15 British premieres, out of the 19 items played. The sole exception was Brian Fernyehough's String Quartet No 2, which is now an Arditti staple, receiving its 50th performance by them on November 3 as a more or less familiar prelude to ten hours of daunting innovation. The Fernyehough dates from 1980; the earliest (and oddest) item was Jurg Wittenbach's "Exposition Ajournée" from 1970; Eliasson's "Disegno" and Wolfgang Rihm's Third Quartet date from the latter 1970s; everything else, from the 80s.

It's well to labour the figures for arguably the series presented too much to assimilate at this kind of rate. The abiding impression is a stunned admiration. The Quartet play with absolute conviction in registers as far apart as the chastened quiet of Roger Reynold's "Coconino..." and the shattered landscape "and the relentless vigour of Michael Nyman.

Purists were waving the publicity material aloft after Nyman's piece gave the Raad fiddles their first airing. "Not like the real thing at all", "Purity of tone? I should cocoa". And so on. The usual sophisticated Almeida crowd. Ignoring the clear fact - underlined a week later with Gavin Bryars' Quartet - that these instruments can, indeed, play at conventional levels without distortion but can also be used to generate a powerful and exciting surge of sound.

The new European stars Anders Eliasson, Erhard Grosskopf and Pascal Dusapin show as brightly as hoped and the only Halleys disappointment was Tim Souster's Quartet with Tape; he keeps coming back, but this certainly wasn't one of his brighter visitations.

Again, too much, too quickly. Each evening had one item too many, but frustratingly, nothing so obviously redundant as to be a candidate for omission. We need more of the kind of thing in new music, and more often, but with more breathing space. Brian Fernyehough has gone on record recently as believing that we're overpacking concerts and overloading them with premieres in such a way that the aura of expectation is being lost. "Really listening to contemporary music of quality demands such an intensity and involvement that present-day concert practice is either a reflection of the decay in our hearing capacities or one of its prime causes". The Almeida series certainly generated its own



ALAN TITMUSS

Morris men having fun: Faddis, Wess, Burrell, Jackson

"Bags Groove".

Ernestine Anderson came out and sang a few numbers. I'm afraid that she's weathered her years with considerably less success than McCrae or Vaughan: she strains through material that requires a certain sass which she might be too tired to get hold of now. It also doesn't really do to mix songs like "Sunny" and "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To".

The beef of the evening came with Jimmy Smith, Grady Tate, Frank Foster, Kenny Burrell and Jon Faddis. They played an undemanding set but they mostly played it very well; party turns by every man went off successfully, although Faddis' grotesque crowd-pleasing strophes in "A Night In Tunisia" had me walking towards the exit. Burrell restored peace with one of his rhapsodic strolls through Thad Jones' lovely "A Child Is Born". Smith, looking positively murderous throughout, ripped up "It's Alright With Me" with Tate - excellent fun. And Foster was his expansive, roughly imaginative self. If they'd only done something about Benny Green...

Richard Cook

■ THE ASS London Riverside Studios

KATE AND MIKE Westbrook, funded by the

wonderfully imaginative. All the familiar Westbrook skills are demonstrated: felicitous arrangements employing startling combinations of sound-textures (this piece includes accordion, clarinet, violin, mandolin, tuba, piccolo, piano, saxophones); Kate's vocal dexterity and vivacious stage presence; the apparent facility with which extremely complex and varied ideas are expressed in a rich variety of musical styles.

That's the good news; now for the bad. There were, on the Saturday I saw *The Ass*, less than 100 people present. The previous week I'd gone to see *Les Misérables*, put on by the RSC at the Barbican to great acclaim and (almost) packed houses. Where *The Ass* was lively, inventive and daring, *Les Misérables* was dull, predictable and safe, composed of irritating doggerel set to silly little repetitive jingles masquerading as tunes, dramatizing the worst form of Victorian sentimentality about poverty, prostitution and a vicious penal system - a travesty of the work of a great author and the complete antithesis of the Westbrook piece in every way.

Exit reviewer, baring his long ass's teeth, flattening his long ass's ears, straightening his donkey neck and howling his pandemonium on the indignant air. (Brayve man - Ed.)

Chris Parker

anticipatory momentum but it also, less positively underlined Ferneyhough's point. Houses thinned over the month and at each interval. Those that saw it through emerged a bit shell-shocked and uncomfortably aware that the memory wasn't differentiating between pieces as sharply as it should. As for me, no new string quartets till March, please.

Brian Morton

**RALPH TOWNER &
JOHN ABERCROMBIE
FIRST HOUSE
NORMA WINSTONE &
JOHN TAYLOR
London Logan Hall**

AN ECM evening, situated in the suitably cosy surroundings of the Logan Hall – and about as soothingly untroubled as the partisan might expect. Actually, it was often rather aggravating.

Taylor is a virtuoso of the Evans mould, fine tuning, eggshell delicacy, strong fibre underneath. His piano accompaniments to Norma Winstone's voice are full of clean detail which underlines the voice instead of decorating it. But one grew hungry for a thicker broth instead of this cool, clear consommé. Taylor's tunes sometimes misplace their melodic spark while striving for harmonic subtlety, and Winstone's singing is mostly pleasant without applying the torch. Their version of "In Your Own Sweet Way" was a spoiler: the wayward embellishments did nothing but obscure Brubeck's charming melody, the song's best feature.

First House, contrarily, tried to be muscular and succeeded only in shadowboxing. In a lamentable set of compositions, alto, piano, bass and drums wandered fruitlessly over a terrain utterly cheerless in its lack of interest. A further suggestion, as if we haven't had enough already, that modal material like this needs colossal character to be stamped into it if it's going to register at all. In this faceless group, only Django Bates at the keyboard gave any indication of doing any such thing.

After this, almost anything might have been okay; but Ralph and John, despite travel fatigue, were pretty good anyway. This guitar duo is a peach because the styles are temperamentally close and sonically disparate: Abercrombie's lemony runs on electric spring away from Towner's 12-string and acoustic chords and the yin and yang operates on several levels – silence and intense activity, filigree phrasing and many-noted volleys. If they sometimes drifted towards noodling, the end of the tune usually came in time to restore decision.

There's a slight suspicion that they're already a greatest-hits partnership – much of this material was familiar, like "Timeless" and "Ralph's Piano Waltz". But their dry and sometimes quite humorous approach to the lush, leafy tune is consistently engaging. Even at the beginning, when they felt their way through an improvisation into the charming folds of "Ralph's Piano Waltz", one felt that the music was intelligent, fully-formed, discreetly passionate. Very ECM – but good as well.

Richard Cook



DENNIS W LEWIS



THE MUSICAL talent on display at the GLC's *Making The Breaks* show (Donmar Warehouse) suggested that London's 'amateur' bands are playing to high professional standards – this was a striking evening of young music. Lush Life, a band featuring Kevin Robinson on trumpet and Ray Carless on tenor, led into the hot gospel of Revelation 22 and singers Jenice Mullings, Beverley Wint and Susan and Hazel Noel; then came the Abibi Jazz Arts, powerfully fronted by tenorman Courtney Pine and vocalist Cleveland Watkiss. Let's hope the GLC's demise won't mean the end of this sort of event.

Dennis Lewis

Tito and Celia look for a rug to cut



SUE STEWARD
talks to Celia
Cruz, the Latin
American legend
who finds it
easier to sing
than speak.



LA INCOMPARABLE CELIA

THERE IS no-one like Celia Cruz. She is Monarch, Matriarchy and Deity rolled into one generous, charismatic and magical persona. She exudes an exceptional sensual exoticism whilst retaining real-life qualities which keep her within the Family. As an entertainer, she is an unrivalled source of escapism. "No protest songs, only happy songs," she insisted last year in an interview before her first London concert in eight years. "I want to see people smile when I sing." And smile they did, one swoopy, crooned line of a romantic bolero or fast-clipped praise-song to a rumba can suspend sorrow, heartache and anxiety in the coolest of fashions.

A Celia Cruz performance, whether in the impersonal cavern of Madison Square Garden or the relative intimacy of Hammersmith Palais, is a cathartic, purifying and ecstatic experience. Cruz's mighty voice is simultaneously soothing and enervating; she works through your body and soul like a faith healer who cures without actual touch. Small wonder that rumours persist – in spite of her denial – that she is a Priestess in the Afro-Cuban cult religion of Santería, which is a Cuban synthesis of Yoruba animism with Catholicism's saint system. Her powers are never in dispute.

There is only one female star in Latin music – possibly because such entrenched machismocracy can tolerate only one woman at the top, only one Madonna and Matriarch, who is allowed to rule as long as she doesn't rock the boat. Showbiz is still undesirable for 'nice girls', though things have improved since Celia's youthful early days when a female relative had to chaperone her on her musical forays. That surely can't be a realistic hurdle today, but even so there are no obvious contenders for her crown.

When we met in her hotel room last year, I started with that question. "Everyone asks me that," she said. "There are two or three other women, but no more." Then with a throaty cackle, she rubbed her fingers together in a mock mercenary gesture and added, "It's good for me." Then she straightened up. "The trouble is, when somebody comes up, they imitate me. It's no good, you have to be you. But maybe it's not easy for them to do improvisations – most sing boleros (ballads), not salsa." That distinction is what separates Celia Cruz from the pack. Improvisations are reserved in the *montuno* sections of every song. And it is for her skill at improvisation

that Celia Cruz is so revered, by musicians and fans alike.

In salsa, improvisation means a multitude of things. Whilst Celia Cruz performs, she maintains non-stop dancing movements, skittering across the stage with the agility and light-footedness of a woman of much younger years. A virtuoso singer like Cruz has to be quickwitted as well as the possessor of an acute and accurate sense of rhythm. Her exact, impeccable sense of timing, and crisply clipped words, precisely tagged to the beat, are her trademarks. But there is much more to her style than that. Part of her skill is her talents as a kind of operatic rapper: during the band's instrumental solos, she maintains a non-stop involvement. While some singers fade to the stage edge and quietly observe, Celia exhorts the soloist, urges him on, praises the tricks of the skilful men who back her, and lets out yelps and whoops of delight at some musical nuance which keeps the whole band fresh.

When it comes to her turn proper, her own ad-libs are often no more mystifying than commentaries on the music, the audience's response, and sung chats about her dresses (for which she is adored), a new hairstyle, her shoes (usually perilously high plastic creations which she dons at the last possible moment before stepping onstage). But they also leave the realms of realism and glide off into some wordless ether where the true skill of a scat improviser is stretched. At these moments, with a muted, rich Willie Colon horn arrangement for company, or Papa Lucca's fast dissections of the beat (hardly recognizable as a piano) echoing perfectly her own punctuation, something close to perfection is reached. Even during the extremes of these interactions, she never loses sight of her own beat, and like the best of the salsa singers, she can switch (often in one verse) from the languorous intimacy and confidential tones of a bolero into the full-throated stridency of a totally Spanish songstress at work on the jerky rhythms of a rumba. A song like her much-loved "Quimbo Quimbara", recorded with Tito Puente in the '70s, illustrates the ease with which she swoops and glides; and the chorus, a fast repetition of "Quimbara" is faster but clearer than an auctioneer's chant.

IN EVERYDAY speech, Celia's voice has the same clarity of diction, and power. She could literally fill an average hall without amplification. When she talks, her voice

rides harsh and striking above everyone else – but on stage she softens and relaxes the force and becomes a completely different style of singer. Comparisons are made between Celia Cruz and the other 'greats' of singing, and the usual one made is between Celia and Ella Fitzgerald. But Cruz takes the skill and precision of Ella Fitzgerald onto a new plane with her greater dynamic range, her more ambitious ideas for improvising scope. I asked her how she came to be so good at it.

"I'm not a composer – I would like to be, they have a lot of money! – but I improvise. I didn't train, it's natural. I don't know how it happens – it's like a speaker, they don't have to study, it comes from inside."

Her Cuban friend Luis interjected, "There is a slave saying, 'We sing instead of crying'." In her *Official Biography* she said, "It's something you're born with. You can't practise ahead of time because it won't come out right. You'll start thinking about what you're going to say, and the same thing never comes out twice."

With a schedule like hers, there would hardly be any time for rehearsal anyway. Rehearsals are live shows. In the course of 1984, she worked ten months of the year. When we met in London in July, she could not see a break until Christmas. Her hundreds of thousands of fans are now scattered across the globe. The recent fanaticism for salsa in Japan has led to begging requests by the Japanese salsa band, Noco Cubana (evidently an 'authentic' exciting band) for Celia to perform there. Whilst being perfectly happy with constant travel, ("Home is in the plane. In the hotels,") Japan was just



Hector Casanova, Celia Cruz and Johnny Pacheco – together on Salsa Day, 1978.



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CELIA CRUZ

that little bit too far from her Queens, New York home to contemplate at that time. Concorde will put paid to those fears, and Celia Cruz's empire will span the earth. In Africa, her first trip with the Sonora Matancera in the '70s coincided with the passion for rumbas in Central and West Africa, though she was a bit miffed to discover that "the most popular group was Johnny Pacheco, not me!"

One place she does not tour is Cuba. Since 1960, when she and the Sonora Matancera (with whom she worked for 15 years) defected, Celia's name has disappeared from official memory, and it is said that Castro was personally very upset by her betrayal. She was refused admission to attend her father's funeral recently, and, as I had been warned, politics – and particularly American-Cuban politics – are no-go areas. Far enough, considering many of her 14 brothers and sisters still live there.

But in spite of so many years' absence, Cuba is still clearly her homeland. As we go to press, a unique concert is about to happen in New York's SOB's Club. It is nearly 30 years since she recorded a pair of albums of *Santeria Yoruba* songs, accompanied only by the then exclusively sacred bata drums (double-ended, waisted drums, strapped horizontally onto the musician and played like congas). As part of a three-night celebration of Celia Cruz's various musical contexts, the New York programmer and musical director, Verna Gillis, invited Cruz to work with Cuban bata drummer Daniel Ponce, and a band of Cuban, Puerto Rican–New York musicians, whose identity is based on the traditional religious music of Cuban cult religions. Milton Cordona, the ubiquitous and highly talented conga and bata player, is a practising priest of *Santeria*, whilst Daniel Ponce like Cordona, has taken the drum into the secular context of a dance band. For Cruz, this concert will be a trip down the passages of time, to the period when she was the Queen of the Cuban nightclubs, and spent much of each year travelling between the island home and North and South America. As a result of this concert, she is receiving her first interview with the *New York Times*, a disgusting omission – and one that, with this major feature, marks the beginning of a new acceptance for this woman who carefully guards her true age, but whose career has given pleasure to something around three generations of Spanish-speaking fans.

MUSIC HAS always been central in Celia Cruz's life. As a child, she was the favoured lullaby singer. Even the neighbours used to come round to listen to her bedtime songs. A cousin pushed her into a radio talent contest while she was a trainee literature teacher, and winning the prize led to regular radio spots and fixed her career forever. She studied at the Havana Conservatoire for three years: "Solfage, theory – and piano," she said; then with a twinkle and just the right pause and hint of self-mockery, she added "But I didn't like to cut my nails." I glanced at the immaculately manicured fingertips, long lozenge shapes coated in opaque white lacquer. Later that night, I noticed how she used those nails in performance, like a

Balinese dancer, to emphasize gestures, complement and dramatize her lyrics and improvisations.

The radio spots led to an offer from the Sonora Matancera big band, then Cuba's favourite dance band. That was a productive, 15-year-long partnership which continued inside America and is occasionally resurrected in concerts in New York today – though many of the men in the band are now around the 70 mark. In 1961, Celia Cruz managed to get rid of the chaperone forever, when she married the Sonora's first trumpeter, a gentle, charming man – Pedro Knight – who gave up his own musical career to manage and look after his wife's. They travel everywhere together, and as Celia's part of a show begins, Pedro quietly takes over control of the orchestra and leads the music for her.

The '60s were lean years for Cruz – in spite of recordings and tours. Bad publicity is today's explanation for her lack of the success she later found. The turning point came in 1973 when Larry Harlow invited her to play *Gracia Divina* – the Tina Turner character – in his salsa production of *Tommy*, called "Hommy". Her performance in that show at Carnegie Hall brought the mainly young audience to their feet, and Celia Cruz to their hearts – and put her into circulation in the newly developed salsa scene. Waiting in the wings to record with her was the Dominican bandleader Johnny Pacheco. Their first album together, *Celia & Johnny*, grafted the new sound of faster, electric New York salsa onto the favourite old '50s and '60s hits of the Cuban bands. It couldn't fail – and didn't. The record went gold, and introduced Celia to the Family of Salsa, and eventually into the Fania records stable, where she still resides. Her 1985 record with Johnny Pacheco is, if anything, harder and has a modern feel. Songs like "Las Divorciadas" – divorced women – would have been inconceivable 20 years ago.

It is partly this capacity to encompass change which has led to her continuing success. Many singers of her age have resisted ideas from younger musicians, but Cruz has been both receptive and open to men like Willie Colon and Johnny Pacheco who have introduced her to new styles – Colon has her singing a Brazilian song ("Berimbau") on their 1981 album together, *Willie y Celia*. As Verna Gillis commented on the eve of the Yoruban songs concert with Daniel Ponce et al, she is having to sing differently from the usual salsa styles – even though they do encompass rumbas, mambos, boleros and the hypnotic, slow guaguancos for which she is most loved. Willie Colon himself commented on her adaptability and willingness to be produced in new and challenging styles.

TODAY, CELIA Cruz spans that gap somewhere between Royalty and Show Biz. Her famous costumes over the years reveal a changing persona which has been matched by this musical metamorphosis. In the '50s, before moving to New York, when she was the toast of the Havana Tropicano nightclub (where American money was spent like water while Cuban people suffered in poverty all around) she was famous for the ridiculously high bouffant wigs and faintly sheath dresses, Cubanized with flamenco ruffles and rumba frills; come the late '60s and '70s, her braided and beaded locks

transformed her into a character from an Egyptian frieze, and led one New York journalist to describe her as a "Hitite goddess".

More recently, curly wigs have softened her sharp features, and her dresses are sometimes more flowing – though no less spangled. At last year's Carnegie Hall concert to celebrate Cuban and Puerto Rican music, she reverted to her rumba heyday, sheathed and ruffled from neck to floor, in a bright pink dress that twisted and writhed with her every non-stop movement, and stretched out into an immense train for the entire Sonora Matancera to cling to as they congealed across the stage in a nostalgic finale.

In 'real life', Celia Cruz is a petite, elegant woman whose stylishness is a shock. I had expected at least some indication of kitsch, but at her hotel bar stool, in large-rimmed glasses (which soon came off as the camera came out) she sat immaculate in a three-piece navy pin-striped suit and red blouse, with just a hint of a ruff, wearing only gold and jet jewellery.

Her hotel room was tidy and functional, and the only signs of anything personal were on the two surfaces, summing up many things about this woman for whom such anonymity is home. On one shelf were rows of bottles and vitamins: "I take care of myself. That's how I do it. I don't drink or smoke, and when I finish work I go home or come to my hotel. I take vitamins – a lot of them!"

"When I'm going to sing, I never permit interviews" (guilt). "The doctor told me it's easier for me to sing than to speak now. Maybe now with this interview," she taunted me, "I could have made four records." I could see how she couldn't last in Cuba, but I could also see in that twinkling sense of humour, that slight ambiguity about everything she said, a hint of what I had been told by *Irakere* was the essence of the Cuban personality.

On the other shelf were a cluster of small, colourful clay or wood statues – the *Santos* which are part of the ceremonies of *Santeria*, which make beautiful ornaments, and constantly remind her of home.





DONALD BANKS

THE SINGER, THE LAWYER AND THE PRESIDENT

WILLIAM EDWARD Thompson is trying to concentrate. He is no stranger to hard work but the office door is cracked open and the sounds floating up from the basement are a distraction, an incentive to go down below and pop the whip a little if his protégé shows any signs of slack. Bill is a big man, sharply dressed with that curious style affected by middle-aged men of weighting down the necktie with a heavy gold chain. Here on Washington D.C.'s North Capitol it is the law practice that pays the rent, but the shoestring recording studio in the basement holds quite another kind of promise.

Down below, under the weight of the law as it were, and struggling with the vagaries that live in sin with low budgets is a singer – an excellent singer – in his early thirties named Donald Banks, known throughout the Chocolate City as Jackie Boy. Most people don't even know his real name.

There was a time before the road crash that wrecked the career of Teddy Pendergrass when Jackie Boy and Teddy stood together backstage at the Capitol Centre and Teddy confided in that once husky voice, "Ain't no more room out there. Watch. All I gotta do is stick my head out that door. Watch them women." It is nothing that Jackie Boy has not heard before – recording at Philadelphia International and being told that one Teddy Pendergrass voice was enough for the world.

Cruelty can work both ways, however, and now the lover man is disabled. Now Jackie Boy is fighting a piano and a guitar that could use some tuning with a song that starts out just like Teddy with Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes on "Be For Real": "Baby, I've got something I wanna say to you. No sit down. Just sit down and let me explain to you how I feel."

Donald is recording a ballad, "Just One More Chance", in the classic Philly soul style for Capital City Records. Capital City (also known as Capitol Hill Records in the manner of small labels everywhere) is owned by his mentor and manager – attorney and counsellor at law W. Edward Thompson. W. Edward, known as Bill, has his own ideas for this group down in the basement. Jackie Boy and Nature's Creation will be recording a straight left to the head lyric of Bill's entitled "Status Quo". Though the record will hit the D.C. stores in 1983 it is another two years before it appears in London import shops like Groove and Bluebird and a little while longer still before 4th and Broadway at Island (through the efforts of Julien Palmer) set a licensing deal in motion.

The flurry of interest around "Status

Quo" has been interpreted to a degree as a part of the Go-Go campaign that began in earnest in late '84. Go-Go being the black funk style of Washington D.C., then "Status Quo" was inevitably a part of it. This is not quite accurate. "Status Quo" is more a classic grinding slow funk beat in the lineage of rawness that is now almost extinct. It does not have the bass drum syncopations that distinguish Go-Go from all other strands of funk yet somehow it is impossible to imagine the record being made in any other city of America.

SO WHAT's the story here? One record. Plenty of records around. Maybe it's the story of one instance in which the Civil Rights movement of the Sixties converged with a later generation who were struggling to articulate (through a music too rough for the mainstream) their lack of faith in the American political system. It is also the story of independent music, so long considered the divine right of paleface brats (black music labels like Def Jam and T.T.E.D. have crumbled that little concert).



Why is it that a respectable lawyer needs to write an anti-Reaganomic song like "Status Quo" and underwrite a group of raw soul hopefuls like Jackie Boy and Nature's Creation with his hard-earned money? This calls for an autobiography from W. Edward in order fully to understand the history of duress out of which a temporary dancefloor buzz can evolve.

As Donald leaves the room briefly to locate some potato chips, Bill tells me one way to start an independent label in America:

"I was born in the South, in Virginia. My

daddy fought Hitler in World War Two. He was on his way with the last invasion to Hiroshima when they dropped the bomb. They made my daddy wash pots and shine shoes. He couldn't go to school because there were no schools. I had to walk four miles a day through the rain, the blood, the sweat, mud and tears when I was little to get to school to one room with a pot-bellied stove in with 40, 50 kids and one teacher. At the same time there were those white kids that I grew up with. They was allowed to ride the warm, yellow, new school bus to a consolidated school.

"My father always taught us not to hate people. He never talked about hate. He always talked about love. I went to church. There we were taught to love the enemy. As a kid, that's where I began to develop my principles and my pride. I couldn't understand why people were unjust to me and my father and we hadn't done nothing to them. So I went through school. When I finished high school I had a third-rate education. Couldn't read, write or spell but then after I got up to the 12th grade I didn't see no future on that farm. So I told my daddy, who was ploughing the mules in a tobacco field, that I wanted to go to college. He was shocked. You see, dad would always discuss politics, he would always teach at Sunday School. I was his first right-hand man on the farm.

"From that I went away and worked two jobs for six months and I went to college. Got in there and I paid my tuition and worked. So then, as I've grown up – 1960s Stokely Carmichael and Jim Foreman and Martin Luther King all started marching. When they started marching I started marching and I became president of the student civil rights organisation for Norfolk State. We had to try to fight everybody to eat in the restaurant. By me being the leader and by me being independently employed they couldn't stop me because I didn't need school's money to go to school.

"I was able to marshal two universities – Norfolk State and a white school over the other side of town. So I put the two schools together and when we was marching on the street they had their police dogs and them goddam gas hoses and big sticks. I would take the white kid right by the hand and we'd line up – white black white black. Walked right up to the dogs. Now here this dog is in the hands of this white kid's daddy and this dog don't know nothin' about black or white. He's gonna bite anybody's ass he can get. So the police would obviously whup my head but when he start whupping the dog goin' start biting. So they failed. By us putting these organisations together that's where I began to develop a leadership ability."

Bill Thompson used such ingenuity to surmount further barbaric practices of segregation: jumping fully clothed into the YMCA swimming pool in mid-winter to halt a boycott on blacks. Creating civilisation with wit and grit. Now returned with his potato chips, Donald Banks (a generation removed from such confrontations) finds the stories amusing in a respectful sort of way.

His own particular struggles have centred around the vicissitudes of music. Or should I say Music Business? The Washington D.C. music scene is unusual, to say the least. Rastafarians playing hardcore, hardcore punks playing Go-Go and as for the Go-Go – well, freak unique, as they say. Go-Go can only be described properly as a crusade. It is both noun (the music as well as the place where you go to go-go) and the name of the experience of going to a go-go), adjective and verb. Its relationship to bare-breasted women dancing in front of drunken men is purely historical. The go-go was a place to hear music.

That's also a disco, right? Disco was problem number one for Donald. Sometimes it seems that Donald might have found more talking space if he'd teamed up with Muhammad Ali rather than Bill Thompson. I wedge him a space and he jumps in: "I've always had obstacles in the way. When I was about 22 years old disco came to America, OK, and I wanted to work but no clubs would book me. They knew I was good but they wanted to save money so they would tell me, 'We don't need a band or a singer. We've got records.' It really insulted me."

IT IS at times like these that a young man's fancy turns to entrepreneurial skills. Jackie Boy involved himself first in small promotions for his own music and then as the fledgling Go-Go scene took off he moved into that. It shouldn't take visitors to black Washington D.C. too long to become aware of the rivalries and frictions within Go-Go. Jackie Boy got bumped, in a word, and now finds himself on the outside looking in. As Thomp says, they are looking to upgrade the Go-Go. Well, for my money the Go-Go is as high octane as it comes but I let that pass because I like these records Jackie Boy has been involved in: "Let's Fire It Up" by Nature's Creation featuring Chief Sir Funky (a veritable phrasebook of the D.C. slang so lovingly documented by Stuart Cosgrove in various publications elsewhere – "Now we've got the bomb let's fire it up so we can turn this mother out." Quite.); "Frank Unique", again Nature's Creation, the nature's creation being the group leaders John and Jessie Blanks – identical twins.

Donald also wrote a song called "In The Pocket", well known in its time. It appeared on Chuck Brown's *Funk Express* album on Source. Last February I sat watching Chuck consume huge quantities of food in my hotel room. He says (in between complimenting the seafood) as a response to my complimenting "In The Pocket" as a track I enjoyed on an otherwise doubtful album, "You did?" as if to say this guy's crazy.

"If I'd done it with my band it would have been very very raunchy. Real raunchy and downright funky. I think I got some publishing on that tune. That little boy Donald Banks – the boy who wrote it – it's his song and he was trying to write it for me. I liked it when I heard it. He's a pretty good little writer. It's just that, number one it was in the wrong key. I was strainin'. Everything on that album was in the wrong key but that was in the key of F and should have been in Eb which is my favourite key for that particular type of song. I didn't like that album. That's the California sound. I wasn't motivated into contributing anything other than the singing on the album. I just did what I was told."

Chuck just having had a million seller with "Bustin' Loose", Donald reckoned on the big break. Through the machinations of Source Records his chance was lost. Eventually Donald decided to lie low. Now through his manager's lyric, his group's dancefloor power and his own voice he has another opportunity in the popular music lottery.

"Status Quo" is a song that addresses those who voted for Reagan and Bush and who now feel sold out. The steelworkers and farmers – the working-class vote who thought Reagan would 'do it to the niggers' but who found he was doing it to them as well.

"See you have to understand," says the lawyer, "that the people that control the money in America control Reagan. The people that control the money control Congress because lobbyists basically influence the legislators. Legislators basically vote for what the people who support their campaign want. Therefore, it's inconsistent with what's for the benefit of the average person and it has nothing to do with race. It we began through these types of movements and this type of music to call this to the consciousness of people then half of them'd take a real serious look. We're not radicalising. I think the group – Donald and Nature's Creation – they've put together a very sophisticated type of music. The message itself can be accepted."

I think we can guess that the singer agrees from behind his shades. What the president thinks is anybody's guess.

How about a lesson in civil

rights, Go-Go rap, Reagonomics



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JAYNE HOUGHTON

CHARLIE WATTS
ME? DO A BIG BAND?
WELL, WHY NOT?

So he did. Charlie Watts, famous beat group drummer, tells **RICHARD COOK** about how he hired Ronnie Scott's and put a great big band in there.

C HARLIE, WHY'RE you doing this big band thing?

Well, I always wanted a band with Ron Matthewson and Dave Green—we were brought up together—it's like a dream. I got John Stevens to

help sort it out... and it suddenly got like, well, who do we leave out? It ended up being a big band. I wanted it to be fun, that's the idea. It's serious, gotta be, when you get this many people—marvellous people, y'know. Twenty-nine musicians.

Isn't that rather a lot?

It is, rather, biggest big band in the world I call it. What I've done is—nobody's ever asked me to play 'ere, at Ronnie's, so I bought the Club for a week! And I've got the best players in Britain—there's Harry Beckett, look, fuckin' marvellous... the alto section is amazing. That trombone section is the best you could possibly have. Wanted two vibraphone players... lovely to see them playing.

Material's a bit 30s and 40s. Not all that modern.

That's the idea. I wanted to keep it straight and easy and play pure dance band material and see what people like Courtney Pine do with it. Most of us haven't played in real big bands much. What I wanted to happen, when you've done the melody like, is see what a player like Pete King does with it. Six tenor players who'll all have a go. Once you get into the original stuff... to start with, this'll do. Easier for me too.

How do you fit in with John Stevens?

Good. I did a drum thing with 'im and Clifford Jarvis—played "Where Or When" for three-quarters of an hour. And John was the only one who'd asked me to play with him. Became friends—I don't play on the circuit, know what I mean—and he helped me get it together. He was the drive. Takes three months to put this sort of thing together. All these people are working. And they're all keen.

You're not exactly the front man in your pop group. What's it like being the boss here?

I'm not really the boss. Alan Cohen did the arrangements. And you can't really 'ear at the back there! It's a lifetime thing—Buddy Rich counts every number in, but 'e's done it for 60 years of his life. This is a bit subtler than rock'n'roll, the playing, when you're playing with horns. You've got to keep the beat, same as in rock'n'roll, but there's more light and shade. The gig's the same though. I don't really prefer one to the other—I have a lot of fun with The Stones.

Must be nice to use brushes for a change.

I use brushes on Stones sessions—Chicago players used to use them a lot. But the kids don't use them much now.

Going to do any more of this sort of thing?

See 'ow it goes, y'know. It's a lot of band to pay, 29 people, as far promoters go. We're recording this on a mobile, but a record's another thing—that's not the idea. Mike Vickers asked me to do a record with original material but, well, I've done that. This is different.

Does all this disprove that jazz is dead?

Well, it is dead, in a way, isn't it? Who plays saxophone like Peter King any more? The art's gone, really. We've had Sonny Rollins on one of our records, and you don't get any better—but it's all done in the studio. This sort of playing, these guys just standing up and playing—not the same as overdubbing. Where's the attraction for a kid to play saxophone? When I was 18 all I wanted to do was be Earl Bostic or Charlie Parker!





22 WENT TO SWING

And they called themselves Loose Tubes. **STUART NICHOLSON** sits

in for a session with a booming modern big band.

IN A single step of youthful exuberance, Loose Tubes have arrived. They seem to have appeared, fully formed, a folly of 21 musicians in defiance of the commercial and logistical problems posed in an age when big bands aren't supposed to come back.

Undeniably, a band which, as it happens, is very big, this particular agglomeration is on no nostalgia kick, avoids the stage band clichés and isn't a free ensemble making a frenzied assault on the subjective. Instead, they've developed a refreshingly original repertoire, a unique representation and probably have more leaders than any other group in the history of jazz. 22 in all, the entire band plus an administrator participate in the decision-making process of the band in the tradition of that great British institution, the committee. They're a musical collective that see themselves as a band of equals stressing group identity, and it's either in spite of, or because of this, that their music is conspicuously category free.

Refusing to follow established precedents, they run the whole contemporary gamut – gone is the sectionalised war of attrition that's been the main resource of big band jazz since the Swing Era, and in its place the sweep of imagination uninhibited by category or boundary. Gospel, Latin, funk, ragtime and rough-and-ready choral passages are seamlessly threaded together to sound unexpectedly right. Hybrid instrumental combinations ambush the listener with a glorious noise that can include a reed's whistle, cello, dustbin lid, a tuba, bugle, melodica and the crash of a heavy-metal tea tray.

But it would be wrong to suppose ensemble textures were weighted down by whistles, gongs and things that go bump in the night – highly mobile passages frequently recur that conceal the number of feet pedalling beneath. The big brass and sax sections are surprisingly tight on their feet and the rhythm section is tight, effortlessly coping with rock, reggae, ragtime, inside and outside and any other side that's whistled up during performance. For Loose Tubes are very much an in-person band, and whilst the detailed minutiae of nuance lurk beneath the surface, it's the robust foreplay that

grabs attention with shouting ensemble passages thrusting soloists into orbit.

LOOSE TUBES boast some of the finest young musicians on the London scene today, and every concert has strong individual contributions from the likes of Tim Whitehead, Iain Ballamy and Dave Bittelli on saxes, trumpeter Dave DeFries and a rhythm section that includes Django Bates, Steve Berry, Nic France and Steve Arguelles. All can be heard on the band's recent self-produced album as they attempt to break into the big time.

"Most of the players came together at Graham Collier's Creative Workshops," explains the band's administrator Colin Lazzarini. "He was working towards a repertory orchestra that provided advanced training for young musicians playing music they would not normally be exposed to. But gradually the band began to evolve a personality of its own, expressed best in material actually written from within the band. Arrangements by Steve Berry and Django Bates seemed more in tune with the direction they wanted to head in, and with Collier's blessing, the band left his control to do their own thing."

To assert their independence, the name "Loose Tubes" was mooted in opposition to the more establishment names they had felt in danger of being saddled with. Then followed a round of poorly paid gigs as they tried to make a name for themselves. They finally began to impinge on the national consciousness following a rave review by John Fordham in the *Guardian*, who predicted a bright future for the band after seeing their appearance at Covent Garden's "Seven Days". But it was after a booking at Ronnie Scott's in May '85 that the British jazz establishment really sat up and took notice. The collective critical response could conservatively be described as ecstatic. But this key event in their development almost failed to materialise.

"We got a demo tape to Pete King," says Lazzarini, "but despite his enthusiasm for the band, he understandably blanched at booking an almost unknown 21-piece band for a week's stay." His commercial misgivings were assuaged by a 7th Cavalry appearance of the Musicians Union

Promotions Committee, who underwrote the booking to the tune of £1500. The result surprised even the laconic Ronnie Scott – they attracted good business every night, which is something the occasional big name may not achieve. "We were immediately booked for a return the following December," said Lazzarini, "plus several Festivals including the Salon du Jazz in Paris, which we hope will provide an entrée to Europe."

SO AS the future brightens for Loose Tubes, patience and potential are held in fine balance; a musical collective is a wonderful thing in theory, but in practice it could mean pulling in several directions at once. Fine intention can be suffocated by factional interest, and uneasy compromise breeds a beast that is neither fish nor fowl.

"It's true that Django Bates and Steve Berry organise and direct Loose Tubes," asserts Lazzarini, "but we would like it made clear that it is organised and directed by everybody else as well." But a democracy shouldn't be afraid of the ballot box, and a firm hand on the tiller of musical policy, both on stage and in the recording studio, could well be in everybody's long-term interest. In the rarefied atmosphere the band are beginning to breathe – they are the most exciting event in British Jazz – self-analysis becomes increasingly difficult. Loose Tubes have discovered that an audience does not come of right with an Arts Council grant, it has to be earned. So they are showing it's possible to achieve aesthetic goals whilst playing music with a common touch, and people are responding. They have opened the door to a wider following, which is good news for jazz in general, and Loose Tubes in particular.

Who are Loose Tubes? Here is the complete and unexpurgated cast list: Steve Arguelles, Iain Ballamy, Chris Batchelor, Django Bates, Steve Berry, Dave Bittelli, Steve Buckley, Steve Day, Dave DeFries, John Ecott, Nic France, John Harborne, Lance Kelly, Mark Lockheart, John Parricelli, Eddie Parker, Dave Powell, Dai Pritchard, Richard Pywell, Ashley Slater, Tim Whitehead and Colin Lazzarini the band's administrator.



RICHARD COOK meets **Mathilde Santing** and explains why this singer will turn your heart.



MATHILDE SANTING TAKE IT TO THE BRIDGE

LET'S START with the hyperbole: Mathilde Santing might be the only contemporary singer who can enrich and extend the torch tradition beyond the simple reiteration of the great standards.

Phew. But this stocky Dutch woman has a voice and a method that manage to invest some very old and well-worn songs with a precipitously modern edge. She likes to sing tunes like "You Go To My Head" and "You Took Advantage Of Me", or she will just as readily tackle an intelligent new song like Squeeze's "Tempted"; it all counts as good songwriting to her, and anything of quality is fair game for an interpretive singer. The difference between Santing and pop starlets like Sade or Madonna is this consuming love for the grain and resin of a good song.

"I really believe in the lyrics I sing. I think of it line by line – yeah. It's like telling a story, and I picture every line to myself.

"Most of the time I feel a lot better after I've sung, than before. Also because you get attention, of course, and applause. Suddenly you're there again. You exist. Before, I feel awful. I feel all the things I do wrong. Afterwards, it's satisfaction."

Santing is working in an area controlled by pop tastes: in consequence, she seems to have been tagged as a kind of cute eccentric, dredging up ancient pieces of Tin Pan Alley and recording LPs that sound like almost nothing else in pop. Her ten-inch mini-LP *Mathilde Santing* (1982) has such unlikely bedfellows as "I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face" and *The Beach Boys' "Here Today"*, sung over the "super automatic accompaniment" of a keyboard and rhythm box; and her only other UK release, last year's *Water Under The Bridge*, is a collection of original material by the singer and her confederate Dennis Duchhart. The early record is an unassuming tour de force of high-risk singing – it's incredible, on a debut release, that her nerve was strong enough to tackle a song as difficult as "You Go To My Head" over a backing that allows the singer the merest matchstick support.

Water Under The Bridge is even more compelling, because Duchhart has devised settings that are as original as Santing's own voice. Violin, harp, trumpet and

marimba colour the discreet throb of electric keyboards, and the music is a dappled backdrop for Mathilde's searching vocals. Her voice is quite achingly clear, very high in range, a balance of girlish sweetness and something altogether tougher. Her articulation is astonishingly pure, reminiscent almost of the grave sonority of the young Sinatra. And these new songs are heartbroken, so severely lovely (especially "Too Much" and "Turn Your Heart") that they make you shiver.

"I think," she says, looking at her cigarette, "that I'm best at the sad songs. My voice has changed in the last year – it's become much more dark – and when I sing, sometimes, I'm much more angry. Before, I had more 'leave me alone, let me indulge in my sadness'. Now it's more (clenches fist) I'll show you!" But Mathilde is smiling.

SHE IS not very willing to talk – tired, perhaps, after a show at Ronnie Scott's Club the previous night. Live, her voice has the piercing clarity of a great instrumentalist, the quality of cutting through cloudy ensembles and indifferent PAs. If she occasionally over-embellishes a lyric, with maybe one too many swoops, her loving attack on songs like "I Must Have Done Something Good" and an extraordinarily taut "Why Try To Change Me Now?" is giddy with pleasure.

This is the old nightclub routine made new.

"There are periods of time when I think, well, I should start looking again for new songs to sing. I usually listen to old records and make tapes of the ones I like. And I usually know straight away when I hear a song I want to sing. My heart starts beating very quickly. It has to have a good melody, and the lyrics have to be a bit non-specific.

"For the original material, I make very few changes – I time and phrase the song when I get to know it, so I sing it naturally, and any change is minimal. With a cover song, I'm much more free."

Hence a dramatic reshape like that done on "Little Girl Blue", made into a fingersnap pick-me-up instead of the usual bathetic theatre. She cuts an unlikely figure, with her beggy men's clothes, round face and close-cropped hair; her singing of English is almost flawless, but

when she speaks you can hear the heavy Dutch vowels. What singers did she grow up with?

"I was really a younger sister of boys, and I had the taste of the people around me. The only thing I listened to for myself was lady singers – Janis Ian, Phoebe Snow, Dusty Springfield, Joni Mitchell."

Then how did she come to hear songs like "You Go To My Head"?

"On Frank Sinatra albums. When I looked for songs to sing, that's where I looked. With pop songs, the actual song is very intertwined with the production and the arrangement. The old standards are usually written on a piano, written as a vocal line with chords, and for me that was the top period for the art of composing. They would always write a nice bridge – there would be a whole structure for a song. Verse, bridge, chorus..."

"The way I sing often depends on how well I can hear myself. It's so rare that you're able to hear yourself so clearly that you can sing at your best. There was no such thing as a good sound on that stage last night. I had to sing with my finger in my ear."

"I'm on my way to dropping all the synthesizers and just using acoustic instruments. I want the instruments to sound as natural as my singing. You can't do dynamics with a synthesizer, not really."

Such remarks – which amount to a performer standing up for human music, even when she's working primarily in the dehumanizing state of a pop business – should be enough to kindle any listener's interest. If you know Santing's records, or caught one of her recent live shows, then you're probably eager to hear more. But she works very slowly – three years between her two LPs, and only occasional live work. Meanwhile, her standards remain with standards.

"I go to the publishing house," she sighs, "and they play me songs, or people send me tapes. And I say sorry, there's no way I'm going to sing those. I want a song to be so good that I'll always enjoy singing it. I don't want to have to defend a song. I want to be able to walk on it – steady ground. Do you understand?"

She suddenly gives me a sharp look. Well, of course. I like good songs too.



FIRST PRIZE: Don Cherry by Andrew Hart of Clydebank. "I like this because the photo's so clear – the background makes a fine contrast and it's a lovely expression on his face!"



FIRST RUNNER-UP Eddie Lockjaw Davis by H. Mottershead of Wythenshawe, Manchester. "Not such a clearly-focused photo, but great expression and perception."



SECOND RUNNER-UP: Don Weller by Denis Dalby of Leeds.

"This is such a good photo of Don – just sums him up – having a fag after a steaming solo, I'll bet!"

THE WIRE/PENTAX PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS



*Teddy Edwards by Frank
Watson of London*



*Jean Carne by Leslie Pyle
of Lancashire*



*Andy Shephard by Chris
Randolph of Stroud*



*Carnival Dancer by Gary
Trotter of Slough*

Well! We were overwhelmed by the response to our little contest – not only by the number of entries, but by the consistently high quality of pictures submitted.

It made picking the winners a very hard matter, but our panel of judges (R.D. Cook, Jayne Houghton and Annie Whitehead) have after much deliberation decided to award the first three prizes to the talented trio whose work is shown on these pages.

To everybody who entered – thanks for making the judging such a pleasurable difficult task! Here are the winning pictures, together with comments by Ms Whitehead – and a selection of the best of the rest.



Gil Evans by Frederick Symes of Kingston

MAX HARRISON leads us up the avant garden path again.

TEN CONCERTS by 32 performers playing music by 41 composers might serve as a quick description of the new Park Lane Group series. This takes place in the Purcell Room for a week each January and there are two programmes each evening, a short one at 6pm and a longer one at 7.30pm. They run this year from January 6 to 10 and will introduce many new performers, for the sequence is actually called 'Young Artists in Twentieth-Century Music'. Despite occasional items such as Berio's "Sequenza IXb" and Morris Pert's "Luminos", most of the music is not of the extreme avant-garde sort likely to be demanded by the more austere Wire readers, but for others there will be plenty to listen to and think about.

Operations commence, for example, on January 6 at 6pm with a recital by Nicholas Unwin, whose centrepiece is Constant Lambert's Piano Sonata (1928-29). This is the second of Lambert's three main jazz-influenced works, the others being the "Rio Grande" (1927) and the Piano Concerto (1930-31). In both Sonata and Concerto jazz runs deep underground, but its presence is undeniably felt throughout. Unwin also plays Bartók's refreshingly astringent Sonata and John McCabe's Variations. Then at 7.30pm there is an interesting programme by Rachel Brown (flute) and others that includes a new piece, as yet untitled, by Barry Guy for flute and pre-recorded tape, and a work for the same medium, "Passage", by Jean-Claude Risset. Lyn Fletcher and Martin Loveday also play items for violin and cello by Honegger, Eisler, and Kodály's great Duo.

Another piece incorporating the use of tape, Milton Babbitt's "Vision and Prayer" for mezzo soprano and tape (1961), is heard at the 6pm concert on January 7. This was a pioneering work, and probably the first of real quality, in the combination of a live performer with pre-recorded material. It uses a text by Dylan Thomas. The singer, Jenny Miller, also offers a group of songs by Charles Ives, and two pieces by Michael Berkeley, one for voice, and one for clarinet, receive their premières. The clarinettist is Michael Whight, who also takes part in the 7.30pm concert, performing Harrison Birtwistle's Verses and giving the première of a new clarinet piece, title as yet unknown, by P. Racine Fricker. There are piano duets, too, by Kathryn and John Lenehan, notably Debussy's rarefied "Six Epigraphes Antiques" and Stravinsky's own arrangement of "Le Sacre du Printemps". It is revealing, especially from the rhythmic viewpoint, to hear this last stripped of its orchestral finery.

The clarinet, now played by Duncan Prescott, also features in the 6pm program-

me on January 8. This is where Pert's "Luminos" comes in, flanked with a Suite by Priaux Reinier and a Sonata by York Bowen. Ives reappears at the 7.30pm show with his great Piano Trio, played by the Hirsch Trio, and there is another piece for soprano voice (Tracey Chadwell) and tape in Bernard Rands's Ballad III. The kick-off is with Shostakovich's disappointing Piano Trio No. 2, and there is the London première of Elisabeth Maconchy's Three New Songs.

At 6pm on January 9 trumpet (Andrew Crowley) and tuba (Oren Marshall), rather than clarinet, are to the fore, with P. Maxwell Davies's early Trumpet Sonata (1955) and Hindemith's late Tuba Sonata (1955). The world première is presented of Robert Harvey's Diversions for Tuba, the London première of André Jolivet's "Hépatade" for trumpet and percussion. At 7.30pm the Pneuma Wind Quintet take over with Ligeti's Six Bagatelles, Jean Françaix's Quintet and the UK première of Marek Stachowski's Pezzo Grazioso. The pianist Simon Lebens also takes part, contributing some Preludes by Maurice Ohana, a new piece for piano and tape by Javier Alvarez, and Messiaen's "Ile de Feu II". This last is especially important and belongs to the same group of *Quatre Etudes de Rythme* (1949-50) as the "Modes de Valeurs et d'Intensités" referred to in the Stockhausen essay in this magazine's issue of March 1985.

BERIO'S "SEQUENZA IXb", mentioned above, is heard at 6pm on the final day, January 10, from Martin Robertson, alto saxophone. He also plays a new work by Mark Anthony Turnage, Denisov's Saxophone Sonata, and gives the world première of Michael Henry's curiously titled "Say 'Ave' for Me". At 7.30pm there is a good deal of bassoon music from Jean Owen, and here again one of the titles is amusing - "Après une Lecture de Dreiser" by Alain Margoni. Laszlo Dubrovay's "Cinque Pezzi" are included, too, as is a Sonata by Einojuhani Rautavaara, the prominent Finnish composer (who also gave you "The True And False Unicorn" Op. 58). The pianist Victor Sangiorgio is on hand as well, with a Sonata by Cyril Scott and the "Fantaisie Espagnole" of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji. The latter deserves a page and more to himself, and so must wait for another time.

Meanwhile, three more Purcell Room events should be noted. On January 14 at 7.30pm the Lysis ensemble presents 'New Composition in the UK', a concert made up of the first performances of Edward Shipley's "My Dearest Friend", George Nicholson's "Stilleven", and the first London hearings of Lyell Cresswell's Variations and Anthony Powers's Nocturnes. Book 2. Then on January 19 at 7.30pm comes 'Experimental Music of the 1950s and '60s'.

CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL

This is given by a group in effect made up of AMM plus Ian Mitchell (clarinets) and John White (tuba, electronics). They offer "Pairs" by Christian Wolf, "The King Of Denmark" by Morton Feldman and "Ode Machine No. 2" by the (fortunately!) inimitable Cornelius Cardew.

One of my favourite stories concerning an avant-garde composer has to do with Feldman. According to John Cage, they were on their way to an engagement together, Cage driving, Feldman asleep beside him. Suddenly Feldman wakes up and says, "Now that everything's so free, there's so much to do." Then he goes back to sleep again. But anyway, on January 23 at 7.30pm you can obtain a whole evening of Simon Bainbridge from the Endymion Ensemble. Conducted by the composer himself, they perform "Landscapes And Magic Words", "Voicing", Concertante in Moto Perpetuo, Quintet, and Three Pieces for Chamber Orchestra. A bargain at prices ranging from £2 to £4.

Edward Shipley surfaces again on January 30 at 7.45pm in a Queen Elizabeth Hall programme called 'Trumpet/Organ Music - Past and Present'. His "M'dina" receives its London première and there are new pieces for trumpet and organ by Robert Saxton and Paul Edlin. Also heard is Max Kellner's Processional Fanfares for Six Trumpets, Timpani and Organ. This sounds a bit intimidating.



NICK WHITE

ZWERIN . . . who's fooling who?

HOW CAN they be so sure?

Reviewing my autobiography *Close Enough For Jazz* in *Jazz Times*, critic Stanley Dance said it "reads like the ego-trip of an overgrown hippy", and that I play "corny valve trombone". Maybe he's right. In the book he edited for Quartet, *Russian Jazz, New Identity*, Leo Feigin makes it clear that he considers anybody not totally overwhelmed by the Russian jazz he releases on Leo Records to be a fool. There are repeated unkind remarks about critics, Mike Hennessey and Leonard Feather in particular. Everybody, from Chick Corea to Feigin, agrees that critics are incompetent nitwits who wouldn't know a valid improvisation if we smoked one. Maybe they're right too. (Gimme a break, Mike - Ed.)

Feather and Hennessey love the music, are knowledgeable, aware of their responsibilities to the musicians and the public, make it clear that their views are taste rather than absolute values and are usually on firm ground. At least I think so.

A correspondent for *Jazz Hot* magazine calls from time to time to ask how I liked so and so who just did a recent concert or the latest releases. Usually we don't agree. Or, worse: "I don't know," I may say. He makes it clear he considers me a fool. Most people refuse to question their own taste. They consider an open mind weak. Perhaps it is.

Actually it may be true that most jazz criticism is inferior, but most everything is inferior. And there is one common denominator exception. Everybody agrees that Boris Vian is one of the best jazz critics ever, though his jazz writing has never been translated and nobody seems to have read it - not even the French literary critics who are sure that Vian is one of the best French novelists of the 20th century. Which is a smooth transition. Or is it?

Through combining liberty of syntax

with a fresh, snappy Americanised style, Vian invented modern French journalism as represented by such 'hip' publications as *Actuel* and *Liberation*. (Is it hip to be 'hip'?) He was at the centre of the Existentialist scene after World War II, played Bixie cornet in the caves of St. Germain des Pres and such novels as *L'Automne A Pékin* and *L'Herbe Rouge* are still widely read.

More than any other critic, Vian translated the joy and swing of jazz into prose with his passionate pieces in *Jazz Hot* magazine and the newspaper *Combat* (founded by Albert Camus) in the Forties and Fifties. He died of a heart ailment in 1959 at the age of 39.

After listening to some Charlie Shavers records, Vian psychoanalysed him: "Shavers, maybe I'm making a big mistake, but you are obviously no homosexual. On the other hand, unless I'm making another mistake, you are also not faithful to your lady."

His 1948 allegory referring to the furious and he thought irrelevant debate then raging between critic Hugues Panassie and Secretary-General of the Hot Club de France Charles Delaunay - it was referred to as 'The Schism' without irony and Vian calls the two of them 'Hot Club Popes' - about the worth of bebop begins when Josef Goebbels rings Vian's doorbell, greeting him: "Heil Gillespie!" During their conversation, Vian asks whatever happened to Herman Goering. He learns that Goering is not dead after all: "He's playing bongos in the UN bebop band."

"Since it is necessary to be serious from time to time," he begins a record review, "I will write today of recent releases you might hint you want to your parents or employees (if you are president of a corporation) on the occasion of your birthday which just happens to fall this week."

He could be pontifical himself, though humour and the swing of his syntax save him. Like many 'jazzy' (a favourite Vianistic adjective) Frenchmen, Vian was sure that the only real jazz was made by Afro-Americans: "Louis Armstrong at his worst is better than Glenn Miller at his best." (Could he be right?) And about Artie Shaw's Gramercy Five, which featured a harpsichord: "It's not new enough to be sensational and not sensational enough to be new."

One reason I approve of Vian is that we both wrote words and played music and could not relate to jazz clergy. And he was once called "a corny cornet player". In 1966, before I'd ever heard of Boris Vian, I reviewed a bunch of albums for the *Village Voice* under the title "Send More Records". The tone of my lead was very much like his in the June 14, 1949 issue of *Combat*: "It has been a long time since I reviewed new records. I should explain that the record companies are really stingy, you have to go begging to their offices for review copies. I hate begging so I don't get many and that is why I don't review more of them . . . Blue Star is, however, an exception and so, voila, let's talk about the latest Blue Stars . . ."

His *Jazz Catechism* pokes fun at people like Panassie, Dance and Feigin who consider their opinions to be irrefutable dogma. One question: "Does Louis Armstrong have more talent than Gillespie?" The dogmatic answer: "Anyone who even mentions Armstrong and Gillespie in the same sentence is a fool."

He knew that anyone who knows who the fools are is a fool. That's about the only thing I'm sure of myself. I'm not even sure Boris Vian is the best jazz critic, although I think so.

PLAYLIST

BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE This is (CBS)
ART PEPPER Meets the Rhythm Section (Contemporary)
ANTHONY BRAXTON This Time (*Affinity*)
KATE BUSH Hounds of Love (EMI)
JAMAALADEEN TACUMA Renaissance Man (Gramavision)
TELEVISION Marquee Moon (Elektra)
CABARET VOLTAIRE The Covenant The Sword And The Arm Of The Law (Virgin)
ORNETTE COLEMAN Tomorrow Is The Question (Contemporary)
STRAIGHT NO CHASER (NME Tape)
ANDREW POPPY The Beating Of Wings (ZTT)

SAMAR Music From Yemen (Lyrican)
LOL COXHILL Ear Of Beholder (Dandelion)
SUPER RAIL BAND OF THE BUFFET HOTEL
DE LA GARE DE BAKAMO New Dimensions in Rail Culture (Globe Style)
FAUST The Faust Tapes (Caroline)
JARRETT/GARBAREK Belonging (ECM)
BAKER/PEPPER Playboys (Bopcity)
GLASTONBURY FAYRE 1971 (*Revelations*)
NICK DRAKE Five Leaves Left (Island)
STOMPING AT THE SAVOY (NME Tape)
ORNETTE COLEMAN Live At Golden Circle Vol 1 (*Blue Note*)

MILES DAVIS QUINTET Ascenseur Pour l'Echafaud (Mercury)
AMM The Crypt 12 June 68 (*Matchless*)
MAX ROACH/ANTHONY BRAXTON One In Two Two In One (*HatArt*)
ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO Certain Blacks (America)
WORKING WEEK Venceremos (we will win) (Paladin)
THREPPENNY GROUP W Ciekich Czasach (*ARS Polska*)
JOHN COLTRANE A Love Supreme (Impulse)
LESTER BOWIE The Great Pretender (ECM)
GIL SCOTT HERON/BRIAN JACKSON The Bottle (A&E)
ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO Among the People (*Praxis*)

**WILL
FRIEDWALD
celebrates the
high style of
veteran bop
vocalist
Anita O'Day.**

ANITA O'DAY

WHAT A DIFFERENCE O'DAY MAKES

ANCIENT NEW Yorker cartoon, first panel: cat meowing loudly on a fence, late at night; second panel: irate man, wanting to sleep, yells "Scat!"; third panel: cat opens mouth and goes "Oop-Bop-Sh'barn!"

We're fortunate that all three of the great modern jazz scat singers are still appearing and recording today. Ella Fitzgerald is still turning them out for Pablo Records, Mel Tormé works harder than ever, and Anita O'Day, who has another terrific album on her own Emily Records, just celebrated her 50th anniversary in show business at a Carnegie Hall gala (although the three great post-modern singers, Betty Carter, Sheila Jordan and Jeanne Lee aren't doing as well). The classic recordings of all three are being constantly reissued (not in America—we've learned to expect that) in Japan and Europe.

I hate set-ups like this, where now I've led you to expect I'm going to pick one of the three as the best, and the title of the story gives you a good idea who. But despite my love for Tormé and Fitzgerald, O'Day used her Carnegie Hall concert to prove that she's still the most exhilarating jazz-singer going, and, at the same time, often one of the sloppiest and most frustrating. Especially in that I've always thought that Old Man Achilles was a phony, it's unlikely that anything as trivial as your heel will keep you from being great. Instead, I put my trust in what Timothy Mouse told Dumbo, that "The same things that held you down are going to carry you up, up, up!" Meaning that O'Day's goofiness, her imprecise voice, her monumental vulnerability and overpowering unpredictability will always turn off a lot of people; but at the same time, they're the things that make her great.

The concert began with William B. Williams, whose name appeared in the ads in hopes of attracting WNEW listeners, but, in a tacky move that seems typical of the station (notice that WNEW isn't putting her picture up in the subways), he didn't show up. Instead, the engineer ran a prerecorded tape in which Williams charmed us out of our seats by saying something about how Anita O'Day has "risen from degradation". True enough, if you want to put it that way. Her 1981 autobiography *Hard Times, High Times* is a masterpiece of tragedy, pathos, Three Stooges-style slapstick comedy and melodrama in the original Greek meaning of "Music Drama", rivalled in this respect only by Art Pepper's *Straight Life*. But, clearly, we should honour O'Day for what she has achieved musically rather than for

her very entertaining life story.

TO BACKTRACK a bit, as early as 1924, Clif Edwards showed how singers could imitate instruments and create entire scattered choruses over chord changes. Within a few years, Louis Armstrong and Bing Crosby made it clear that you didn't have to make cornet noises to sing jazz, and, in the process gave the newly-born art of jazz singing definition, repertoire and at least two-thirds of the vocabulary still used today. Ten years later, Leo Watson, and to a lesser degree the young Ella Fitzgerald, freed the voice from the limits of both lyrics and prewritten melodies of any kind.

But it wasn't until the early '40s that Anita O'Day came along and laid the foundations for bop-era vocalization, through her commitment to the harmonic exploration of material, her removal of the barriers between singing lyrics and scatting, improvising and using the composer's melody; and her advanced rhythmic style, which, through its reliance on shorter notes and faster tempos, anticipates some of the rhythmic innovations standardized later by Charlie Parker. The old wives' tale that this was due to a vocal accident caused by a clumsy doctor has about as much believability as the story of how Armstrong invented scat singing when he dropped his sheet music.

O'Day's earliest records, made with the Gene Krupa Orchestra, might be made available some day if only Columbia bothered. When O'Day reprised one of her Krupa numbers at the concert, "Opus One", she reminded us how much she has grown since her early Twenties—now, the 32-bar vocal refrain and silly lyrics (that seem to deliberately parody the whole concept of attaching words to big band riffs) can scarcely contain her. A Japanese Capitol album, *Girls & Kanton* (Toshiba EMI ECJ-50075), contains the four commercially-issued tracks she made with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, but a further four with a Kanton small band have yet to be released (except one which appeared in the middle of a giant Japanese anthology).

THANKFULLY, BOB Thiele has reissued O'Day's first "solo" sessions, which he produced for his own label back in 1947. The album, *Hi Ho! Trailus Boot Whip* (Doctor Jazz), while marred by an unflattering contemporary picture of O'Day, contains some of her best work on vinyl, from the title rhythm vehicle to the haunting Ralph Burns arrangement of "Key Largo" to the ground-breaking "How High The Moon", where, in parts, she sings the lyric but not the melody; and "Malaguena", where she

uses the melody but not one word of the lyric.

Ironically, musicologist Martin Williams turned this same "How High The Moon" into evidence against her by comparing it with Ella Fitzgerald's equally classic "Moon". Ella, Williams argued, constructed more imaginative lines, used further-out intervals and emphasized the more martian notes of the chord change. All of which is true, but as Ella herself once sang, "I ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it". O'Day's harmony may be relatively conventional, but sheer unpredictability makes listening to her an adventure every time out. To Fitzgerald, a ballad is a ballad and a scat number is a scat number every time out, but you never know what Anita is going to do next. Even on a relatively routine performance she'll take the tonic note at the end of a line a whole octave higher than you expect her to, and she'll follow this logically but abruptly by changing the tempo and slowly spiralling down.

It would be childish to attribute this to her unstable personal life. If her two closest disciples, June Christy and Chris Connor, were to write their own autobiographies, their closets would surely include skeletons enough to make them soul-mates with O'Day. But it's telling that while both chose to begin their careers (in the Stan Kenton Orchestra) by assimilating O'Day's compelling vibratoless tone, neither tried to keep up with her in this respect. Chris Connor re-conventionalized the O'Day style, for instance, by acting "cool" on certain songs and "warm" in all the places where you'd expect a post-Billie Holiday singer to be "warm". June Christy took the high road, paid more attention to the dramatic aspects of lyric interpretation, and created extended works like "Something Cool" and "Lonely Woman", which Anita, for all her spontaneity, would never have been able to sustain.

The trio numbers that made up the first part of the concert, as well as most of the tunes on her new album, offered her raw unpredictability in action. Jay Leonhart, the best of the younger (meaning under 60) bassists on the vocal scene, had no more idea what O'Day was going to do next than we did, and grimaced wildly at both her and us all night. But one by one, she transformed all the mishaps of a rather haphazardly produced concert into assets. When a blue spot failed to hit her on a ballad, which happened several times during the evening, she made a face and cracked a joke—even if she was a couple of lines into the song—that turned out to be more entertaining than a correctly-



O'Day at the
height of her
height

functioning spotlight would have been.

Remember the line in *Amadeus*, where the author comments on how changing one bar of Mozart's music would make the whole piece collapse? O'Day constantly changes more than single bars, but attacks tempos, rhythmic configurations and melodic lines, so that entire structures change and sometimes fall apart—but what a beautiful sound they make as they break off and hit the floor! On "I Cried For You", she chopped one line into Armstrong-size phrases and then, after using the "Your Turn" fragment as an opportunity to introduce solos from the trio, Leonhart plucked out a quote from Charlie Parker.

After intermission, during which O'Day lingered on stage and kvelled with the customers until Leonhart dragged her off, a 16-piece big band came out. Most of the big band charts were transcribed (the originals having been stolen many years ago) from her '50s and early '60s Verve LPs, like "You're The Top" (renamed "You're The Bop") from *Anita*, to the middle-eastern polyrhythmic version of "Sweet Georgia Brown" from *Pick Yourself*

Up. It would be too much to expect Polygram to make any of these records available, except on a mishmash twofor called *The Big Band Sessions*, but you can get virtually all of the Verves from Japan.

"With a big band I sing the melody," she told Dick Cavett a few years back, "with a small group I sing the melody and the fills, and that's how jazz was born!" Despite this feeling, the band never overwhelmed her or got in her way, even if it meant turning 16 men into a giant piano, supplying chord changes for her to improvise on top of. She can get away with just singing the melody.

A SONG For You (Emily ER-83084), her most recent record, shares the strengths and weaknesses of both the concert and the other albums in the Emily series. The song choices may be routine (most are repeats of tunes she's done elsewhere, although the new "When Sunny Gets Blue" moves me more than the one on *Waiter Make Mine Blues*) she finds musical value in the least likely places, such as Michel Legrand's usually monotonous chanson, "The Rest Of Your Life". Poole revitalizes "Opus One", as he did at

Carnegie, with modern drum locks unknown to Krupa in 1945. As far as accompaniment goes, we shouldn't hold it against Ronell Bright that though he's a very good pianist, he's no Hank Jones, especially when Don Ruffell's Getz-ian tenor is such an improvement over Ritchie Cole.

Even though the Emily's are generally excellent, I get a sense of her getting into a rut, like Mel Torme making his fourth (and hopefully last) album with George Shearing for the same label. What they both need are worthy instrumental collaborators, on the level of, say, Gerry Mulligan, Benny Golson or the real Stan Getz.

Most of all, she lays to rest that hoary cliché about turning one's voice into an instrument, a misconception that became obsolete sixty years ago. Anita O'Day is a vocal dancer, an Isadora Duncan tapping her toes to a Max Roach drum solo. Or, if you like, she's the hip cat from the New Yorker cartoon, the very same mehtabel that said to archy the cockroach, "toujours gai, toujours gai, there's a dance in the old dame yet!"



Mr Laswell: the light pours out of me

In this rare interview the world's most sought-after mixmaster talks to MARKSINKER about time, travel and the trashing of the beat-box.



BILL LASWELL A COLLISION IN KILLING TIME

A SCREAMING comes across the sky: SPEAK ABOUT DESTRUCTION! It's happened before, but there's nothing to compare to it now. A voice, part siren-wail, part goblin-squawk, a human sound of a time and a place – we had hoped there'd be such a thing, a spell to counter falling objects: if it wasn't enough, it would do for the time being, to speak of threat, to mirror threat, to contain it, the Time's Own Voice: "We think of him like a mountain singer. So we kind of tried to develop that. And it's a lot of work. But he's singing pitch, and he's singing harmony actually, with his own voice. It took a lot of work, and I'm sure he's quite proud of that. Which is probably why he disappeared immediately afterwards. He can sing. I mean he has a sound."

Bill Laswell knows sound. How to take it and shape it, how to use it, harness its energy. And this was certainly a sound going to waste, the mortal howl of one John Lydon formerly Rotten. With times as they are, and shadows mounting, let the boy from Finsbury Park loose, with Afrika Bambaata, Leader of the Zulu Nation, into a dogged whirlwind of hip-hop metal thunder – and if it doesn't work, it's surely worth trying. For all those out there who thought the Rotten voice was only good for helping kick the habit (debilitating rock'n'roll), here's a man talking about pitch and harmony! He must be a lunatic. Or a visionary. He looks at me, smiling as he says it, knowing no one else would dare: "He's the Ornette Coleman of New Wave singing, right?"

LASWELL DOESN'T really belong in *Wire*, they'll tell me. He's a dabbler, an exploiter, a charlatan: and the implication always is that his music is somehow fake – however that might be – it might be new and exciting, but it's hijacking black music away from its true course and deviating from the historic path and so on and so on. He shouldn't be encouraged, he's bad for you. Music will suffer from his intentions, which are not good. Perhaps that's what

fascinates about him, this midwest redneck kid fallen or thrown into the heart of hip black street culture, and clearly surviving, prospering. I like the danger of his position. He has a fallback. If he fails, whatever respect he's earned will collapse around his ears, that's the way it seems.

And all the time, regardless of this, he pushes the boundaries of his collision-fusions further and further across the world, forwards towards some hitech electronic global music, and backwards towards timeless and ancient village musics, the inaccessible instantly broadcast everywhere.

He started as a bass player, and continues and prefers to be one. But for the moment he seems to be better known as a producer. In the last two years his credits have appeared on records by (deep breath) Nona Hendryx, Fela Kuti, Gil Scott Heron, Yellowman, Laurie Anderson, Afrika Bambaata, Foday Musa Suso, The Last Poets, Ronald Shannon Jackson, Sly & Robbie, Shango, B-Side, Deadline, Manu Dibango, Toure Kunda, Mick Jagger, Herbie Hancock. On the horizon are releases from Yoko Ono, PIL, and Motorhead (or so it's rumoured!); he works hard for his living. Not all of these have been a success, although most have been interesting – he seems to find ways of prinking up a tired sound to find things you didn't notice previously – but that leads to charges that he looms too large himself in his productions. He works fast, sometimes too fast: the 'African Quartet' in particular.

"We did those records so fucking quickly in Paris, two of them in like five weeks, we recorded and mixed the whole thing so fast, we were working every day and just trying to get it done. For the artist."

Done too fast, then, to bear the weight of critical attention they've received. Fela Kuti's *Army Arrangement* was a salvage job ("I didn't record those tapes, they were abysmal when I got them. Bad playing of the highest order, you know. I erased all the saxophone, and if Fela doesn't like that, he should learn how to play the saxophone."); two of the others (Toure

Kunda's *Natalia* and Manu Dibango's *Electric Africa*) he regards as favours to the label, fun to do, and nice people to work with, "but not to me very heavy musical statements". (Both are colourful crossover pop, in fact, and only a travesty of all things African if you fervently believe that all Africans should be forbidden use of electricity from now forever – and I've no doubt there's some of you out there do.)

His failures are ambitious failures – and the general course of his successes has earned him a reputation for plunging into barely controlled extremes, splicing together outrageous or impossible juxtapositions, forcing thick noise and hard rhythm to be a value, thriving in coils and huge stutters of sound. If this is fusion, then it certainly isn't the bland elision we've come to associate with that word. No one can accuse the man of being placatory.

THIS INTERVIEW is a snatched hour during his stopover en route from Japan to New York. I'd expected him lean and earnest – he's got a lean and earnest name, don't you think? – but actually he's pretty well filled out. He laughs a lot, partly out of nervousness. We're both nervous, but his unease is only on the surface, knowing perhaps that for once he isn't quite in control, that I could be less harmless than I seem. Under the quickfire talking there's a steely confidence: this man knows where he is, what he wants, how to get it. It's clear that this borderland where we meet,

between words and music, is not one he gives very serious attention:

"It's so difficult to imagine writing about music. I mean, you writing about my music, it's like me trying to play one of your reviews, you know? In a certain way. A guy told me recently that writing about music was like dancing to architecture, you know? This stuck with me."

Limited time, two total strangers discussing something far more intimate than casual stranger chat can really handle, his bodily relationship and commitment to the lure and the practice of music. For my part, I keep getting the urge to shut down this line of talk, involve the others present, exiled by the situation and the nature of my job: photographer Nick White, Mike Knuth, whose flat we're using, Laswell's Japanese companion, who slumps silent on the sofa at his side, hand to her face: I feel rude and intrusive, and the dry little remarks he sometimes drops ("This stuck with me"), private jokes to himself and maybe her, things to keep him involved in something he'd probably rather not be doing, they don't help. Onward.

He's said (to Chris May) that he joined his first band, in his early teens in the late '60s, just to be in a gang – and switched from guitar to bass to fit into some group that needed one. The ghost of that pressure, the need to mould himself to present surroundings, to jump to offer exactly what was required, still hangs around him – but now it comes with his increasingly public need to shake those surroundings up as he fits into them – if he fits into them. His continual half-flippant conversation is the same kind of thing, a way for the sharp provincial to hold his own with the city kids, a turning of an alien street-wisdom to his own ends, something like that. A distance that gives him a usable insight.

He began working seriously in music in the '70s, just at the point when funk and rock seemed to smash headlong into one another – and Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix and Grand Funk Railroad are all somewhere present as early influences – but round this same time he discovered and devoured John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman as well. By the late '70s he'd set up operations in New York, under the aggregate name Material as often as not, with a shifting but not particularly large cast of co-musicians. Many of these he continues to work with.

Probably the first project to reach a wide public was the song "Bustin' Out" on the 1980 Zeilband compilation *Mutant Disco*: Nona Hendryx singing implacably over a humming EuroDisco beat, a song that pares down with repeated plays into something hurlingly simple, with Laswell's bass like rippling bone, impossibly and peculiarly square to the beat. The title tells its own story, and it's also a first sign of his love affair with the unusual voice: Hendryx could punch holes in granite with hers. ("I like pitches that waver, I like more of a non-tempered sound. I haven't really worked with too many conservative trained singers." Hence Yoko Ono and John Lydon, obviously.)

"Bustin' Out" is odd, too, in its formal structure: it doesn't appear to have one. I'd noticed Laswell had described himself as "constructing" (rather than composing or writing) his songs, and wondered if this choice of word was deliberate:

"I don't think I've ever been involved in a song, you know? I just play things, and I attach them together. Basically I'm not a

songwriter, I'm not a composer – and maybe by that standard not a musician – but I just try to continue. I work with the bass a lot, and I'm very interested in time. And playing freely in time with drummers." He drums a little pattern on the edge of the coffee table, looks at me.

So what's the actual relationship of your improvisation to your actual choice of how to, er, how a song lays out? Hmm, that didn't sound too clear, question make sense to you?

"Absolutely not." He laughs, a bit alarmed.

Try again. When you're beginning a new song, how'd you decide the way it ends up? Is it built up from what you improvise with a drummer?

"Can be like that. I mean, it can go a lot of ways. One is you can get really influenced by what you're interested in at that period, and as you begin to play things you find yourself moving in areas, things you've been hearing. I'm interested more in directions than parts or riffs or lines, so it's born out of a direction. So you say, well, now I'm listening to this particular kind of music, and you find yourself kind of, not copying, but maybe there's a feeling there that's reminiscent of this kind of work, and that creates a direction, and if you take that and just sit down and play with the drummer, let's say, you develop a kind of conversation, and out of that conversation you begin to say things..."

So that means they're pieces which aren't rehearsed before they're played and recorded?

"Yes, exactly. Many times. I prefer that."

And also they couldn't be repeated.

Except by playing back a tape.

"I don't think they're repeatable or should be." He chuckles. "A lot of them aren't repeatable and most of them shouldn't be."

EVEN IN his earliest improvised projects, it's the approach to rhythm problems that determines the form, if not the flavour. Comparison of three records from about the same time ('80-'82ish) demonstrates the degree to which choice of partner might affect not just the music in general (a given in any improvised situation), but the specific rhythmic attack. *Musacre's Killing Time* bursts open with a manic speed and density, a screaming violence of a noise, but the job of disciplining Fred Frith, a frustratingly variable performer, seems to be too much for Laswell and drummer Fred Maher. They push him into one of his most inspired and electrifying performances – but can't afford, it seems, to relax their pressure, and the set strangles on its own shivering rigidity. *Material's Memory Serves* is a lot less cohesive, with its much larger cast (including Henry Threadgill, George Lewis, Billy Bang, Olu Dara, Frith again), but far more interesting as well, a mournful post-holocaust landscape of moaning horns, taped voices: *Baselines* (his only record to date under his own name) is funnier, the desolation wiped away by rhythms that mug lugubriously, loo-sid-jigging.

In both, his own playing is a revelation – he appears to be able to carve out of the air exactly the shape and nuance of beat that he wants, although his lines vary from the robotically simple to fingerbreaking virtuosity. I guess we all know (and hate?) the bit where the bassman steps forward for his lead bible-bobble guitar bit to such serious time-wasting effect – Laswell's

style is far more self-effacing, his lines leap and twist unneringly, but never abdicate their prime function, it seems. On *Baselines* his drum-partner is usually Ronald Shannon Jackson: it's probably no coincidence that this seems to be his favourite of the sets. All are flawed, certainly, but at times they seem to be looking forward to new ways of hearing time, new approaches to free rhythm.

One thing he's had flak for is daring to toy with the beatbox – for the usual reasons, of course, that it's soulless, mechanical, a cheat, whatever. In fact, it seems to have made him all the more appreciative of what it is human time-keepers are creating, the art of building rhythm:

"Yes, it's a high thing to me. You don't have that association when you're working with machinery, so I'm moving out of using any type of machinery."

I'm astonished. Not sure how to continue. I look glumly at the reams of questions this bombshell has rendered useless: there suddenly doesn't seem much point in drawing him out to defending the qualities in red-blinking black boxes that wrists and shoulders lack. So what about the stuttering glory of that *Praxis* twelve-inch, Laswell and beatbox, and Found Sounds edited into pure yammering heaven: will there be no more projects like that?

"I'll do it instinctively, if I think it's maybe fun to do it. Most of the things I do are based on trying to stay amused, and to have a good time." Perfect comedic pause here. "And it's working out real well."

A SERIES of seized opportunities have left him with money to burn, effectively. He has the luxury of choice, for the moment – can go where he wants, and play with who he wants. A lot of the money goes back into Celluloid, the company he owns with Jean Karakos: a lot of it goes on travel.

The chances started with the LP he produced for Nona Hendryx after they'd worked together on the second *Material* LP, *One Down*. He was asked if he'd like to work with Herbie Hancock. He did, Hancock liked the ideas he heard (the rhythm tracks for "Earthbeat" and "Rockit"), and they put together *Future Shock*. Laswell says now that he based *Future Shock* on what he thought he remembered Hancock's *Headhunters* had been like: "This kind of hip black music which was beginning to be technical and beginning to sound like space-age African music or something." Maybe *Headhunters* had been like this, but *Future Shock* certainly was, and the follow-up, *Sound-System*, even more so: Laswell was a name to drop, in the same dance-floor boardrooms as Herbie once had been. Maybe Hancock's work around that time could be some kind of template for Laswell's ambitions, that sense of the Timeless in the Future Now. But Hancock seems to have something of a talent for choosing hopeless work-mates, and for losing his way:

"Yeah, I don't know, Herbie is a case. I think he's maybe an incredible musician somewhere, you know? And he's an improviser also. I can only probably say good things about Herbie. I won't go into any other thing. Let's just say he's a genius."

But then again Laswell's first big-league (ahem) employment was David Allen's New York Gong, not perhaps quite as hard an act to follow as that Miles Davis

Quintet? And Laswell has other things going for him, as well: he can choose productively abrasive sidemen for his own work, and he seems to see deeply into the music of those he produces, finding things in it they may not know themselves. (I'm thinking of Shannon Jackson's *Decade Yourself* and Sly and Robbie's *Language Barrier* in particular here.) This may not always be typical work – that was the complaint made against him over *Toure Kunda* – but he simply isn't a passive actor in production work. He says he doesn't really regard himself as a producer, that his approach to a production job will depend in the end on what the client's prepared, or expects. If they know what they want ("and this is very rare"), he'll just be someone around for them to talk to. In fact, he says he doesn't intend to do so much of this in future (he's said that before though). But he leaves his imprint pretty strongly on most of the stuff he does:

"Well, I don't understand it, people say that, but I don't hear it yet. But I've been told that."

It's less to do with the sound itself than the set-up. But anything apart from the actual sounds you hear puts us in the realms of listener-subjectivity:

"I think it's really to do with names. In fact the next two or three records for major artists I'm doing I'm trying to get people not to put credits on the record of musician and no production credits, and no nothing. No association of names. Because most of the time, I think really words get in the way of your feelings sometimes, and a lot of times people write about a record they're not really writing about the music, they're writing about the names."

Well, indeed. I suppose I ought to have spoken up for my profession at this point – they're not all this bad, not quite – but I'm intrigued at Laswell cutting his own throat, financially. His success with Hancock brought the ludicrous requests flooding in: Turn my bass metal into gold! Which wouldn't have happened without his name on the sleeve: but there we go. Anyway, the revenue from at least one of these prestige productions, the quarter of a million dollars he got for Mick Jagger's *She's The Boss*, will be lining Celluloid's vaults for a while yet.

He seems quite unfazed by his new wealth: if he's rich, for the moment, it just means he's got brief freedom, it won't last. It gives him the opportunity to explore: "In general I'm just beginning to open up to the idea of not depending so much on people that are necessarily famous or popular or in demand. ... I'm trying to make some trips to Korea and to Thailand and to China, and I've been staying a lot in Japan." It also goes to finance OAO, Celluloid's sister label, to put out records that even Celluloid looks sideways at ("It's Laswell's toy," Celluloid told me, "the music he really loves": records by Billy Bang, Daniel Ponce, John McLaughlin's *Devotion*, Shannon Jackson's *Love*, Derek Bailey & George Lewis & John Zorn's *Yankees*, a record by Brij Bhushan Kabra of Indian Slide Guitar. ...)

LET'S GO out on a limb. Let's consider other patterns than conscious planning, verifiable history, dull fact. Let's look at some patterns that are starting to swirl more and more round the Johnny Rotten of New Wave Jazz, Ornette Coleman, right? The idea goes like this (stop me when it

gets daft; but I don't think it does): OK, in the course of his career, Coleman's brought to life two very distinct and vital currents of music – bodies of music that cohere, if they do at all, round some idea of his – bodies of music that make up the bulk of *Wire*'s subject, or a good deal of it. The first (standard history might actually back me up on this one) is '60s Free Jazz, and his idea was *Free Jazz*. The second is European Improvised Music, which maybe developed out of the first, but helped along a lot by riotousness from that series of dates, mid/late '65, when he first unveiled that violin technique. For the sake of argument, and my Important Theory. Please? What's odd, what's exciting, is that both these movements exploded out of a misunderstanding of his intentions and inventions. Productive, brilliant, essential – but still misunderstanding. And it's only now that what he was getting at, really getting at, is leading to a music that's independent of him and still his: with the rise to prominence of a number of graduates of the University of Applied Harmolodics.

The point of all this is that Laswell is one of these graduates, along with Denardo, Jamaaladeen, Shannon Jackson – and they're all friends, and they're all rhythm players. His problems of rhythm eventually dried up '60s Free Jazz; European Improvised Music has never really faced them at all. We shouldn't be surprised to learn that Ornette makes fine distinction between "rhythm" and "beat" and "tempo" – it's the region where fine distinctions need to be made. It's in the region where freedom collides with strict time that Laswell feels his own purpose lies.

"I really follow Shannon. I kind of hear what he's doing. I think we can develop a language, in terms of improvisation, which can be based on a lot of other ideas which don't have to be just, um, don't have to seem like total madness to the audience. It can really start to be like more of a folk kind of improvisation, or a different. ... I don't know how to explain it really, but I think we can find a way to improvise structure and not just sound. Improve pulse and structure, which I've had a lot of success with with him. And also with Denardo, who I've worked with a lot, just trying different ways of moving time, and playing time, and improvising time-figures. Playing together, but improvising in time."

Time for more craziness from me. And the idea that the invention of the beatbox has in fact helped free this generation of time-keepers. Consider what happened to western art when photography came along. Strict time is no longer really worth striving for, there's machines can do that: is perfect reproduction of pulse going to mean something more like psychologically (or spiritually, or physiologically) 'true' representation, a move away from metric accuracy in the scientific sense? Come to think of it, wasn't the point of departure for the whole of 'modern' art the display of African Masks at the Armory Show in the teens of the century? Some phantom of African rhythm-sense is always present in any Afro-American Black music, as a ground, as an ideal, as an inspiration, something always to be striven for in every new development: but only very sporadically foregrounded, very rarely the genuine African percussion continuum (of collective improvisation of structure?). Who better than Ornette. ...? (There's

round and round. And there's OUT!)

Heady stuff, drifting sense of an unknown and strong swelling underground of new music: tie up Laswell's aggressive mix-up of electronics, avant-funk, free structure-improvisation, the chimes and time-sense of his global village musics, with Ornette and Harmolodics (whatever they might actually be), and Ornette's (demonstrably revolutionary) history, and his substantial (uncharted) further explorations. Laswell's deep distrust of record companies may stem, in part, from Ornette's troubles with CBS (which occurred, ironically enough, at just the time when they were "making Jazz-Fusion legitimate", and making way for *Headhunters* among other things).

Ornette at that time had in his possession probably the most interesting tapes of anybody in the world, and they didn't want to know. He had two records' worth of playing with the Joulouka musicians, he had a whole electric band with African singers, he had incredible music, and the documentation was lost. ... he had the whole story, you know, and he still does, but it didn't happen. And it was badly documented, there's big holes in the musical history."

Maybe there's danger in all this intoxication of substituting illusion for real solid stuff – it's happened before. (You don't want to hear about the role of illusion in Aesthetics, do you? Prestidigitation is a Humanism. Another time.) At least one of Laswell's friends seems to have lost his footing: vertigo induced by speed of travel. I'm asking him if he accepts Jamaaladeen's description of their music as "Trojan Horse" music when he cuts me off, says simply, "Well, the Trojan Horse is in prison right now. In Japan. For a bust of marijuana." He'll never get to play there again, probably. "Japan is such an incredible place for a musician like that, that's where he should work, you know." Sad for his friend, and worried about him, he still can't help grinning at Steve Lake's portrait of him (*Wire* 21): "Meanwhile, Jamaaladeen Tacuma has bought himself a balalaika."



He doesn't understand it. "Something is wrong in his system, he plays a little wrong now. He's moving too quickly."

I suggest it's maybe always a bad sign when musicians talk about music as a Trojan Horse; it sounds like a straight admission that you're conning people, yourself, your audience.

"He's conning you, you can believe it." He grins again. "He's like a pimp trying to play music. Something like that. You hear it in his sound, like he's playing too much things, it's too tense, there's no, oh, big problems. I think he played great in *Dancing In Your Head*, these kind of records. That was really great."

It's got to be that there's a whole slew of bass players who use that very fast bubbly

sound.

"Yeah, but that's like the easiest thing in the world to copy, to do, you know? Anyone can do it, they're just modulating, and obvious modulations. There's no fluidity, there's no communication, there's no way when you can stop it."

He snaps his fingers.

"You know you can do many things with the music. I had a really amazing conversation with Ornette, as I was leaving, about, there was a tape I made with Denardo like maybe six years ago, and Ornette had just discovered that tape, and the rhythm section seemed like it was one thing and it was moving throughout the other musics, like the horns and things were playing heads, but the rhythm section was kind of travelling throughout that, but always together, and we don't know how we really did that, but it was something amazing, and really fluid, it wasn't stiff or jagged. That's the kind of thing, there could be something good in this area. That's what I want to develop. With Shannon. A way to play music, and not just blocks of little events. It has to connect."

His plans for the immediate future include work with a trio of distinctive drummers: "Trying to build a kind of situation where you can invite other people and create live situations, but each one is based on a relationship to the drummer." Shannon Jackson is one, obviously, but the other two are more surprising. Tony Williams, and, back from the dead (well, an olive farm in Italy), Ginger Baker: "He's playing I think much better now than he did in Cream and these times, because he's totally straight. And he's much more healthy than he was then. He's playing physically, I never heard anyone play this hard, this kind of feeling."

The project with Shannon Jackson will be pretty physical, too: Jackson and Laswell together with just Peter Brotzmann (of *Machine Gun* white noise notoriety), but the semi-legendary Sonny Sharrock as well, the great lost '60s free guitar player, criminally under-recorded, for some dates in Germany, in February. (Already I'm trying to think of ways of getting sent there to cover it.)

D'YOU THINK music now is generally in a healthy state?

"That depends on who your friends are. I think it's always been a healthy state and it's always been a total disaster. Just depends on your point of view. I'd say that pop music is a disaster, but I'd probably have said that five years ago... I don't think you can just sum it up and say, Yes, it's great times for music. Depends on where you go and who you talk to, your experience. For me it's a great time for music. But I try to make it a point to find the centre."

D'you feel that the cutting edge of music is in the area that you're working?

"No, I can only speak about my own feeling about music, and lately I've felt really motivated by conversations with a lot of people, a lot of people who aren't musicians, and I feel like I can do a lot now. I feel like I haven't started to make music. I've started to make records, I haven't started to make music. And I'll continue to make records, and hopefully some of them will translate to music."

If you couldn't get to work with someone for geographical reasons, perhaps, is there anyone you'd be into sneaking licks from?

"Sneaking licks?" He loves this, teases

me: "I would try that, yeah. Yeah, if you have a lick I would sneak it."

I ask him this to get him to talk about the ethics of Found Noise, those scraps of Short Wave Radio spliced into recordings - he's done it in the past, and I wondered if there was line to be drawn between borrowing and stealing. It turns out he's given this practice up as well. In fact, he's turned quite puritanical about the whole area of remixing tracks.

"I don't do remixes, I don't do dub mixes, I stopped. I don't agree with that format at all. That's a waste of time and money. And it's an insult to the audience, because it's just selling them, you know, out-takes, really. I don't agree with that... remix or disco-mix, dub-mix, record production in general, it's hugely vastly enormously over-rated, and the audience and the people that write this shit are saying that that's really it, that's really happening, and it's rubbish, because it's nothing... The problem there is that people are not producers, they're reproducers, and they're making more money than artists. They're not making more money than me. But they're making more money than the musicians that play on the tracks and that's wrong, that's totally wrong. And there's no way to stop it, I wouldn't know what to say. I mean, I don't want to interfere, but that's my opinion."

As for Found Sound. "I used to be interested in Found Sounds, and now I'm interested in lost sounds. Finally one day I'll establish Lost & Found. That's when I'll have the K-Tel record line of Free Improvised Music."

Are there bands you'd like to play or work with?

"I don't really believe in the concept of the band. A band to me is always a symbol of weakness, always. Or a very strong friendship or musical communication, which is so fucking rare. For me, ZZ Top is a band, and I think they're a good band, and I think they've stayed together for the right reasons, but I don't know of any other bands - that have stayed together like that, still playing a kind of music that I think they genuinely like. Normally bands stay together because they integrate into a corporation or a business, and it becomes financially impossible to break up."

Is there a part of what you do that you like better than the rest?

"Travel is important. Breathing is necessary, and travel is essential, and I'm really curious to travel as much as possible and meet as many musicians in different places as possible. I'd prefer that right now. I don't like this idea of getting assigned to do a record and working for six weeks in a studio and every day it's a kind of How do you like it kind of an atmosphere, which I stopped, I won't do that again. And travelling. I like to improvise, and I'm very curious as I say to work with these particular people. I'm looking for a situation where I can do exactly what I want but also get paid tremendous amounts of money so that I can help my friends."

I ask him which musicians he feels are helping him work towards the areas he wants to move into: he talks about Shannon Jackson, Foday Musa Suso (the kora player), Indian violinist L. Shankar, a young guitarist from California, Steve Vye (I who I feel is maybe taking electric guitar into a whole other area, and maybe past what people even expect the electric guitar to be able to do"), and, from Japan, late of

the Yellow Magic Orchestra and massive teenybop idolom, Riichi Sakamoto.

"I think he's not interested in being a pop star," (No, well, he's been one once already), "and he certainly wasn't interested in being an actor." (He starred opposite David Bowie in the glossy and empty *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*.) "I think he's got real potential. And that's a statement for Japan. Internationally. So yeah, it's quite encouraging, there's many many people, it's all happening right now, and it's difficult to balance the thing, the problem is distance."

"And communication is really the key to the thing, and to try and find a way for all these musicians to communicate, because there's so long between here or New York and Tokyo, for example. There's so much distance. And that's what I've been talking about to a lot of people, of trying to set up a kind of communications system using computers, or an E-Mail system, so we can just speak very quickly without telephone or letters or anything. Right now the key to the whole thing, to me, is communication and follow-up, and to keep people motivated. But this is completely outside of record business, of corporation. I mean, it's a street thing really."

Er, what's E-Mail? I don't ask him. It's a street thing, and all way over my head. Down in the street, another street thing purrs in wait for him, the chauffeured Rolls Royce he's hired for the duration of his stopover. He's going on from the interview to pick up Sly & Robbie from their studio, and go and find a way to have a good time but also get paid tremendous amounts of money so that he can help his friends. I expect he'll succeed. I hope so.



KEY RECORDS

Material: *Memory Serves* (Celluloid ILPS 9693)

Material: *One Down* (Elektra 60206)

Bill Laswell: *Baselines* (OAO/Rough Trade ROUGH 51)

Golden Palominos: *Golden Palominos* (OAO Cell5002)

*Laurie Anderson: *Master Heartbreak*

(Warner Bros 925 077-1)

Herbie Hancock: *Sound-System* (CBS FC 39478)

*Jalaluddin Mansur Nuriddin & D.ST.: *Mean Machine* (12") (Carrere CART 343)

Time Zone (Bambaata & Lydon): *World Destruction* (12") (Virgin VS 743-12)

Praxis: *Praxis* (12") (Carrere CART 331)

Nona Hendryx: *The Art Of Defense* (RCA PL 84989)

Sly & Robbie: *Language Barrier* (Island ILPS 9831)

*Ronald Shannon Jackson: *Decode Yourself* (Island ILPS 9827)

*Herbie Hancock & Foday Musa Suso: *Village Life* (CBS 26397)

* means production only - the rest he plays on)



BRIAN MORTON
listens to
the life and
work of the
British
composer

who, in his 86th year, is
at last being recog-
nized.

ALAN BUSH:

A REVOLUTIONARY WITHOUT HONOUR

ALAN BUSH is 85. He is also virtually unknown (as the cliché goes) in his own country. The "prophet without honour" has become a media stock in trade, readily converted – usually via posthumous performance or publication – into honour without profit. Without profit, that is, to the creator of the work. Alan Bush has waited out the usual death-watch inertia of the musical establishment. This month, at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, his own 85th birthday concert, he exacts an unembittered public revenge for years of inattention, performing his own recent piano pieces and hearing a performance of the *Dialectic* for string quartet.

In that very title is the sharp bit of bone that has made Bush so unpalatable "in his own country" and lifetime. When he wrote, in the essay 'Marxism and Music', "Of all the arts music is the one which seems farthest removed from the influence of social and economic conditions", Bush recognized the barrier between himself and his musical contemporaries and forebears.

Music and ideology, except of an unconscious Elgarian sort, have no place in the same English breath. This, after all, is not Russia. Bush's admiration for Shostakovich offers a point of comparison. When the Russian strayed toward 'Western' formalism, there was a clear way back; the 5th Symphony bore the label "a creative artist's reply to just criticism", a bit of marginalia that demands equal weight on every word and a sense of irony, and which has, inevitably, been taken as an instance of the way Communists browbeat artists.

For a composer like Bush (if, indeed, there is another composer like Bush), there has been no such recourse. In his own country, the prevailing ideology has been a tacit, nods-and-winks one. You don't get a visit from a cultural commissar in England, or an article on political correctness in *Izvestia*. What you get is no visit, no reviews at all. Bush has had to develop the gills and gall to breathe a thinner air.

And he has found it sufficiently sustaining for ambitious work. The nineteenth century more or less casually dismissed England as "das Land ohne Musik". It wasn't literally true, of course, but a matter of point of view and scale of expectation. English music, with the few obvious exceptions, was ineffectually miniature well into this century. Its range – summer nights on the river, Shropshire lads, Wenlock Edge – tended to rule out

larger-scale ambitions. In the symphonic repertoire, Europe's cities were well represented: Prague, Paris, Linz, Shostakovich's Leningrad. But, apart from London, where was England?

ALAN BUSH's Nottingham Symphony, his second, was completed in 1949. Since then, pretty nearly forgotten. Yet it is, in the opinion of its admirers, superior in every regard to Shostakovich. If it is difficult for a composer to work in a depleted atmosphere of neglect, it is perhaps even harder for admirers, whetted on the one or two available things, to gain much sense of a whole. Bush's operas, arguably his major work, have only received full-stage production abroad. In Germany and the USSR, BBC broadcasts give only a partial impression of them, though sufficient to demonstrate their power. Wat Tyler, *Men of Blackmoor*, *The Sugar Reapers* and *Joe Hill*: *The Man Who Never Died* (all of them, save the last, with libretti by Nancy Bush, (the composer's wife) belong to a tradition less dependent on operatic conventions than on more collective traditions, folk music, pageantry, agitprop.

Bush laments the "complete divorce between 'serious' and 'light' music and the ever growing proportion of the latter, together with its increasing inanity". His response, virtually uniquely, has not been to invigorate or 'carnivalize' serious art music with a leaven of popular forms, but, far more radically, to attend to popularly accessible forms with the kind of concentration and application normally only associated with the avant-garde. Perhaps only Cornelius Cardew (now safely dead and thus admissible) has approached popular music so radically.

If the effort sounds anachronistic, that is because we associate it with the popular frontism of the 1930s, where not just left, right and centre linked arms against Fascism, but also politics and the arts. Bush's main direct brush with censorship came from his signature of a People's Convention which was directed against Chamberlain's dithering and which was quickly sanitized by Churchill (who knew the difference between an ally and a friend). Duly restored, Bush and the Workers' Music Association – which he had founded in 1936 – continued to broadcast a remarkable programme of musics to Free Europe.

Perhaps the most radical of all his convictions is the persistence of the past not as tradition but as a fulcrum and lever to progress into a wider, more open future.

To Bush, the most evil act of modern times and the most underplayed of Fascist atrocities, was the expunging of the Bohemian village of Lidice, in reprisal for the murder of Heydrich; the men were butchered, the women sent to concentration camps; the children, most sinisterly of all, were sent for 're-education'. Lidice was removed from the maps and from all records. It had never existed. Bush's unaccompanied choral piece *Lidice* was performed on the site of the 'vanished' township. It is moving music and, in those post-war years, a gesture of faith of both past and future.

That faith and this means of expression (an obvious offshoot of the working-class choral tradition Bush and the WMA have done so much to sustain and broaden) were not obviously determined by his family background which, though conventionally musical, was also conventionally middle-class. Bush studied at the Royal Academy of Music (which had him back later as professor of composition) and under John Ireland. He also studied piano under Benno Moiseewitch and Artur Schnabel; it's perhaps that ability to perform as well as compose that has kept him from the soured isolation and shrinking optimism that is the common lot of underplayed composers.

If Bush turned his back on the class that had more or less routinely given him piano lessons, he also turned his family's Theosophy and spiritualism on its head – as Marx had done with Hegel's Idealism – and became a materialist, though no less committed than the Theosophists to the unity of mankind. "In 1934 I became convinced that the facts about life, including human life, and about the inorganic world from stellar galaxies to atoms were convincingly explained and brilliantly foretold between the years 1844 and 1896 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels."

Case-hardened socialists and Communists are usually unwilling to take the Founding Fathers as literally as that – or without a cushioning of Lenin, Gramsci, Althusser, Benjamin and so on. Composer Michael Tippett, who collaborated with Bush on the 1934 pageant *The March of Time*, has pointed to what he sees as a degree of "naivety" in Bush's approach to life. Yet it remains true that it has been Bush who has faced the paradoxes and problems of the relations of music to the everyday world, to "things that matter". He likes to point to the contradictions of his predecessors on the issue of what music

expresses: itself only? something else? or some mixture of the two? and, if so, what mixture and in what degree?

BUSH RECOGNIZED that music conventionally advances harmonically and rhythmically and that thematic elements are usually added via a text or programme. His aim was to combine the thematic into a constellation of musical thought that avoided the dead ends of party-line dodecaphony, atonality, or equally of ideology-in-music. What he devised within tonality has the formal vigour of Schoenberg's 12-tone system and of Hindemith's and Ansermet's mathematical studies of sound; but which remains capable of an expressiveness normally consigned to the non-musical elements.

The string quartet *Dialectic* is not a propagandist work. It has a structure that even the academically unsound can discern; it has a tension and vigour which convention rehearsed out of the string quartet until late Beethoven and Bartok; and it has a genuinely uplifting impact on the listener. The *Dialectic* began as a cloudy abstraction in Hegel's brain and ended as a shiny pistol in Stalin's hand. Bush's quartet, written in 1929, recorded now and performed again this month before a London audience, belongs to a conception of art we have never, in this country, assimilated. In our rush to condemn 'state interference', 'ideology over art', Shostakovich's 'compromise', we tend to ignore that for Russians there has never been a contradiction between art and politics, ideas, didacticism.

The Soviet tragedy of the 1930s was that 'correctness' set off a new inquisition; our mistake is to concentrate only or even mainly on the artists and intellectuals who died, not on their anonymous comrades. Bush recognizes that "music will not make the revolution". Even in his operas, he resists the temptation of cooked, upbeat endings. His heroes die, but the human chorus continues. Listening to this and to *Dialectic* offers neither consolation nor aesthetic sanctuary, but rather active hope.

(* Alan Bush's *In My Eighth Decade and Other Essays* is published by Kahn & Averil. Hyperion have released an album consisting of the Violin Concerto (1948), Manoug Parikian and the BBC SO; Six



Alan Bush at work in the sixties.

Short Pieces for piano (1983), played by Bush; and *Dialectic* (1929) by the Medici String Quartet (Hyperion A66138). Anna Ambrose's Arts Council film on Alan Bush is available on sale or hire; phone 01 629 9495.)

THE CRITICS' CHOICE

Our team of reviewers pick their favourite records from 1985.



LPS OF THE YEAR

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | DECODE YOURSELF | Ronald Shannon Jackson & The Decoding Society (<i>Antilles</i>) |
| 2 | LIVE IN STOCKHOLM | Miles Davis & John Coltrane (<i>Dragon</i>) |
| 3 | LIVE IN STOCKHOLM - ST THOMAS | Sonny Rollins (<i>Dragon</i>) |
| 4 | ANOTHER WORKOUT | Hank Mobley (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 5 | BLACK CODES (FROM THE UNDERGROUND) | Wynton Marsalis (<i>CBS</i>) |
| 6 | YOU'RE UNDER ARREST | Miles Davis (<i>CBS</i>) |
| 7 | STANDARDS VOL 2 | Keith Jarrett (<i>ECM</i>) |
| 8 | SPORTIN' LIFE | Weather Report (<i>CBS</i>) |
| 9 | LIVE AT SWEET BASIL VOL I | David Murray Big Band (<i>Black Saint</i>) |
| 10 | ALTERNATIVE TAKES | Bud Powell (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 11 | JUMPIN' IN | David Holland Quintet (<i>ECM</i>) |
| 12 | MAGIC TOUCH | Stanley Jordan (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 13 | WRITING IN WATER | Phil Wachsmann (<i>Bead</i>) |
| 14 | HOOK, DRIFT AND SHUFFLE | Evan Parker (<i>Incus</i>) |
| 15 | I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU | Lester Bowie (<i>ECM</i>) |
| 16 | EPIPHANY | Company (<i>Incus</i>) |
| 17 | IN AMSTERDAM | Miles Davis (<i>Jazz Op</i>) |
| 18 | FEET CAN'T FAIL ME NOW | Dirty Dozen Brass Band (<i>Concord</i>) |
| 19 | QUESTIONS | Paul Bley Trio (<i>Steeplechase</i>) |
| 20 | DIANE | Chet Baker & Paul Bley (<i>Steeplechase</i>) |
| 21 | LAOKOON | Krzysztof Zgraja (<i>Muza</i>) |
| 22 | LIVE AT THE HAIG | Bud Shank (<i>Concept</i>) |
| 23 | LE CHAT SE RETOURNE | Tony Coe (<i>Nato</i>) |
| 24 | 14 LOVE POEMS | Peter Brotzmann (<i>FMP</i>) |
| 25 | MY FAVOURITE ANIMALS | Alterations (<i>Nato</i>) |

(The chart was tabulated from the combined votes of Brian Case, Richard Cook, Nick Coleman, Andy Hamilton, Max Harrison, David Ilic, Nick Kimberley, Steve Lake, Kenny Mathieson, Brian Morton, Stuart Nicholson, Brian Priestley, Mark Sinker, Sue Steward and Mike Zwerin.)

TOMORROW IS THE QUESTION
the new music of
ORNETTE COLEMAN



REISSUES

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | TOMORROW IS THE QUESTION | Ornette Coleman (<i>Bopcity</i>) |
| 2 | LIVE AT GREENWICH VILLAGE | Albert Ayler (<i>Impulse</i>) |
| 3 | WAY OUT WEST | Sonny Rollins (<i>Bopcity</i>) |
| 4 | THE AMAZING BUD POWELL VOL II | Bud Powell (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 5 | DOIN' ALRIGHT | Dexter Gordon (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 6 | OUT TO LUNCH | Eric Dolphy (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 7 | CHICAGO CALLING | Johnny Griffin (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 8 | ADAMS APPLE | Wayne Shorter (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 9 | BLUE TRAIN | John Coltrane (<i>Blue Note</i>) |
| 10 | BLOWIN' THE BLUES AWAY | Horace Silver (<i>Blue Note</i>) |



LATIN

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 EL JARDINERO | Wilfredo Vargas (Karen) |
| 2 REALCE | Gilberto Gil (Elektra) |
| 3 CELIA AND JOHNNY - DE NUEVO | Celia Cruz & Johnny Pacheco (VAYA) |
| 4 SUPER ALL STARS | Various (Caiman) |
| 5 VIVA EL RITMO, CUBA BAILA! | Various (Earthworks) |
| 6 LIVE IN WIEN | Astor Piazzolla (Messidor) |
| 7 DANCE CADENCE | Various (Globestyle) |
| 8 CELIA Y WILLIE | Celia Cruz & Willie Colon (VAYA) |
| 9 NEW YORK NOW | Daniel Ponce (Celluloid/OAO) |
| 10 PIONERO DEL SON | Alfredo Valdes (Caiman) |

Chosen by Sue Steward.



AFRICA

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 BOYA YE | M'bilia Bel (Sterns) |
| 2 NENG MAKASSI | Sam Fan Thomas (Tamwo) |
| 3 IMMIGRES | Yousou N'Dour (Celluloid) |
| 4 ASSETOU OUN DIAREBI | Pamelo Mounk'A (APIA) |
| 5 THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BEAT OF SOWETO | Various (Earthworks) |
| 6 SAHARA ELEKTRIK | Various (Globestyle) |
| 7 NATALIA | Toure Kunda (Celluloid) |
| 8 BEST OF LES AMBASSADEURS | Salif Keita (Rounder) |
| 9 DOWN BY LAW | Deadline (Streetwave) |
| 10 L'ANCIEN BELGIQUE | Franco Et Le TPOK Orch (Edi Pop) |

Chosen by Sue Steward and Mark Sinker.



CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITION

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 VARESE: ECUATORIAL, DESERTS, INTEGRALES, HYPERPRISM, OCTANDRE, OFFRANDES | Ensemble Intercontemporain/Boulez (CBS) |
| 2 GLOBOKAR: DISCOURS III & VI, TOUCHER | Holliger/Drouet/Dumas Quartet (Preciosa) |
| 3 TIPPETT: PIANO SONATAS 1-4 | Paul Crossley (CRD) |
| 4 SIMPSON: QUARTET NO 9 | Delme Quartet (Hyperion) |
| 5 STOCKHAUSEN: AUS DEN SIEBEN TAGEN - SETZ SEGEL ZUR SONNE | Musique Vivant Ensemble/Masson (Harmonia Mundi) |
| 6 BUSH: VIOLIN CONCERTO, DIALECTIC, SIX SHORT PIECES | Bush etc (Hyperion) |
| 7 MESSIAEN: PIANO WORKS VOL I | Peter Hill (Unicorn-Kanchana) |
| 8 CORNELIUS CARDEW MEMORIAL CONCERT | Various (Impetus) |
| 9 MELLERS: THE WELLSRING OF LOVES | Various (UEA/Harmonia Mundi) |
| 10 TUBIN: SYMPHONY NO 9 | Gothenburg SO/Jarvi (Conifer) |

Chosen by Max Harrison and Brian Morton.



SOUNDHECK

LESTER BOWIE'S
BRASS FANTASY

I Only Have Eyes For You
(ECM 1296)

Recorded: Brooklyn, New York – February 1985.

I Only Have Eyes For You; Think; Lament; Coming Back, Jamaica; Nonet; When The Spirit Returns. Lester Bowie, Malachi Thompson, Bruce Purse (t); Stanton Davis (t, fl-hn); Craig Harris, Steve Turre (tbn); Vincent Chancey (Fr hn); Bob Stewart (tba); Phillip Wilson (d).

ONE OF the Chicago Art Ensemble's greatest achievements has been their embrace of "Great Black Music"; in particular, their ability to switch easily between popular forms and more abstract musics is rooted in their experience of, and love for, all facets of the Black musical tradition.

Lester Bowie's history exemplifies this catholicity: he's played in carnivals, on the blues and soul circuits; he's lived in Jamaica and Nigeria, studying their indigenous musics; he's recorded hip funk with Defunkt, raw gospel with From The Root To The Source. And his own solo works have provided several barnstorming romps through pop standards – "Hello Dolly" (from *Fast Last*), "St Louis Blues" (Rope A Dope), "Let The Good Times Roll" (*All The Magic*). Most spectacular of all, his brilliantly funny, virtuosic playing on "The Great Pretender" won him a large audience from the pop constituency.

I Only Have Eyes For You is likely to continue this run of popular successes; doowop, reggae and soul all turn up here, treated with typical Bowie panache. He has fun with The Flamingoes' doowop classic: lead trumpet blows alternately mischievous and lyrical as the other brass court each other to a dreamily swaying beat. It's a lovely balance of humour and respect for the song's romantic heart. Side two's "Coming Back, Jamaica" is rumbustious reggae, smartly arranged by a man who's very *au fait* with dub, while the closing "When The Spirit Returns" is a swinging soulful ballad that teeters on the edge of parody. In this mood, rasping, honking and smearing notes in bright, bold swathes, Bowie's zest is irresistible; if his technical arsenal is now familiar, his ability to couple a comic spirit with profound reverence for his source musics remains a

rare attainment. He must be the sharpest jazz humourist since Thelonious Monk.

With a star-studded line-up, a clutch of pop tunes and plenty of superb blowing to enchant all jazz and/or brass fans, I think Mr Bowie has another winning hand here: and, of course, he can always trumpet (Owl – Ed)

Graham Lock

ORNETTE COLEMAN
AND PRIME TIME

Opening The Caravan Of Dreams

(CDP 85001)
Recorded: Caravan Of Dreams, Fort Worth Texas – 1985.

To Know What To Know; Harmolodic Bebop; Sex Spy; City Living; See-Thru; Compute.

Coleman (as, vln, t); Bern Nix, Charles Ellerbee (g); Jamaaladeen Tacuma, Albert MacDowell (b); Sabir Kamal, Denardo Coleman (d).

WELL, IF we can't get to see Ornette, at least we can hear him – if you can find this LP, which at presstime doesn't have a UK distributor. This is Prime Time in performance at Fort Worth's new performing arts centre, Coleman's first gig in his hometown for a quarter century. As one might expect, it's a crazy, confusing, frequently thrilling set that they play.

Not too much has changed in Prime Time's personnel since *Of Human Feelings*, cut in 1979 – Nix, Ellerbee, Tacuma and Denardo are all survivors of that band, and the only new instrument is the second electric bass of MacDowell. Aside from "Sex Spy", which was one of the duets Coleman played with Charlie Haden on *Soapsuds Soapsuds*, the material is new but naggingly familiar in the way that his urban folk survivals always seem to be. "To Know What To Know", for instance, starts on the alto wearily crying a foot-dragging riff that the group pick up and lead raggedly into a free section of bumbling turmoil. Like all the earlier Prime Time songs, the "theme" is little more than melodic doggerel. And we wonder if Ornette cares, if it's no more than the peg to hang the start and finish of the piece on – for it's the process of Prime Time, the waves and banks of rhythms and sounds, that is the group's *raison d'être*.

The ensuing "Harmolodic Bebop" (the

One man fantasises
in brass, the other
dreams in prime
time: Lester Bowie
and Ornette Coleman,
great gentlemen of
brass and reeds,
reflect on getting the
thumbs-up from Wire
reviewers.



ho) affirms the point. It sounds like something that's starting in the middle, a whirling centrifuge of virtuosic playing. The basses and guitars race under and over each other; the drums batter out a tempo that's brutally rhythmic, not in the fashion of Sunny Murray but more like the message-bringing of a manic technological tribe. It's hard to find a bearing in here. But "Sex Spy" is altogether different, something more akin to one of Shannon Jackson's mighty sun dances, the percussion hewing close to an elemental disco rhythm.

Here, and in the second side, Prime Time displays its versatility. "City Living" half-returns to the precise impressionism of old Coleman works like "Snowflakes and Sunshine", its mix of merry energy and jagged rhythmic points matching up to its title. For the first time, the component parts of the group begin to come clear in the mix: Nix and Ellerbe fuse rhythm and lead just as Tacuma and MacDowell do, and you can hear everybody working on a different game while holding on to the same pulse.

All that is, except Ornette himself. The disappointment with *Caravan Of Dreams* is that his own playing lacks either definition or any freshness of detail. The alto rides over the ensemble with sour abandon, but the simplification which has marked his style since he began working with electricity often results here in wild but exhausted riff playing. Although Ornette's wall is inimitable, his melodic imagination has been put out for a rest.

It still leaves Prime Time as a group with bizarre resources, nailed here by the abstractions of the final "Compute": there's a sprinkling of electronics, tempos flicker in and out of the frame and the leader contributes squittering violin and trumpet with a flourish that suggests that he is, after all, going to find a way of breaking inside a music that he conducts more than contributes to.

Sometimes it's all diffuse, and emotionally the music is almost unfathomable beyond the state of turbulence that 'fast' implies, but Prime Time make a great, snappily urgent sound. This is a record you must hear.

Richard Cook

MARION BROWN

Recollections
(Creative Works CW 1001)
Recorded: Soundville Studio, Lucerne 1985.
Don't Take Your Love From Me; Angel Eyes; Round Midnight; I Can't Get Started; After The Rain; Black And Tan Fantasy; Hurry Sundown; Since I Fell For You; Blue Monk; Blues Connotation.
Marion Brown (alto sax solo)

IT'S BEEN said of poetry that it is not heard, but overheard. While that's too glib to serve as a definition it does make its point. And it very accurately reflects the impact of Marion Brown's album of standards.

Solo sax – of this, rather than the Braxton or Evan Parker, type – still has clinging to it a move cliché: the lone practitioner in the upstairs flat. There is, perhaps, too

uniformly plangent a tone to *Recollections* from the Ellington to the Coltrane and Ornette. However, there is no sense that Brown is milking his tunes for undue emotion. They're played as straight as can be and the "arr. M. Brown" note at each title creates an expectation of revisionism that isn't borne out by what follows.

Being christened Marion has a funny effect on some people. Marion Wayne turned into Big John (and Marian Evans became super-macho George Eliot). Brown has none of that – except perhaps a measure of cool. Everything he does is quietly, precisely assertive, the quality which has made him such an able educator. A Romantic of the old sort, he believes in emotional precept and in the need to temper strong feeling with tranquillity.

Recollections doesn't leap off the turntable. It's precisely the kind of record that can get missed in the rush. Which would be a pity, because it repays a bit of patience. It's intimate, personal, required reading on all ten songs and it deserves to be heard. Or overheard.

Brian Morton



ERIC DOLPHY

Out To Lunch
(Blue Note BST 84163)
Recorded: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey – 25 February 1964.
Hat and Beard; Something Sweet Something Tender; Gazzelloni; Out To Lunch; Straight Up And Down.
Eric Dolphy (as, fl, bc); Bobby Hubbard (tr); Bobby Hutcherson (vib); Richard Davis (b); Anthony Williams (d).

A SUBCLAUSE of Chet's Law says that a record cloaked in mystique must have more going for it than simple good blowing. On the surface, a second re-issue of *Out To Lunch* in the space of two and a half years is enough testimony to its special attractions: it sells and it will always sell as another new set of ears discovers its remarkable powers for the first time. Few jazz records, however, evince its endless capacity for continually revealing new things: angles, colourations, meanings. If ever a jazz record deserved to be termed protean, *Out To Lunch* is it.

It's a listening album. Each man is absorbed, transfused and turned outwards by the sheer mutuality of the music; that strange articulation that has no substance in the individual voice but is

only brought into view through the interplay of a group. There is no language to describe that articulation; it is, simply, the sound of collectivity. And that is the source of the mystique.

Perhaps Booker Little would have made a more convincing contribution than Freddie Hubbard. Of all the musicians on the date Hubbard is the only one who sounds slightly wary and uncomfortable with the abstractness of the music – his is a style that relishes the securities of the tangible – but still, he doesn't exactly let the side down. Hutcherson, who has never made a better record, is almost painterly in his dabbling in of harmony and texture, while Williams causes sound to ricochet about these half-suggested structures like the most cantankerously creative of poltergeists. As Dolphy says of his playing on the title track: "Notice Tony. He doesn't play time, he plays."

I used to complain that Dolphy never manages to play a Great Dolphy Solo anywhere on the album. I was missing the point by several million miles. If the lines connecting Hutcherson and Williams create a bizarre web of punctuation and reflex, then Dolphy is its proprietorial spider: as much a part of the web's function as he is its beneficiary. His playing, like that of the supremely subtle Davis, merely stretches the fabric of what the whole group is saying.

Favourite tracks on this listening are the title track and the Monk tribute "Hat And Beard", but I can assure you, by next week my renegade body and soul will be finding sustenance in new quarters of this extraordinary record.

Nick Coleman

LYNN HOPE

Morocco
(Saxophonograph BP-508)
Recorded: Chicago/New York, 1950–54.
Song Of The Wanderer; Tenderly; Poinciana; She's Funny That Way; More Bounce To The Ounce; Star Dust; Free And Easy; Too Young; Morocco; She's Funny That Way; Please Mr Sun; Sentimental Journey; Girl Of My Dream; Broken Hearted; Blues In F; Cherry.
Hope (ts) with various small groups usually inc Mary Hope (p); Billy Hope (d).

HISTORY HASN'T been kind to Lynn Hope. In the early Fifties he was one of black America's favourite musicians ("Tenderly" sold nearly a million copies), and Leroy Jones lovingly recreated his turban-clad flamboyance in his story *The Screamers*. His involvement with the Black Muslim movement provided him with political consciousness unusual in popular musicians of the era.

The problem he's faced is categorization: too schmaltzy for r&b, too jazzy for rock'n'roll, his brashness lacks the invention to be taken seriously as jazz. But his music is worth salvaging for modern ears. His bluesy versions of showbiz standards like "Stardust" and "Tenderly" have an unpretentious sentimentality

C H E C K

which is still moving. He could turn in some convincing romp'n'roll too: led off by ensemble handclapping, "Morocco" is an irresistible dancer, with Lynn's tenor hurried along by furious vibes and guitar.

This selection avoids his most syrupy tracks (bar the painful vocal "Girl Of My Dream"). It's the second recent European reissue of Hope's music. I hope this means that Hope (El Hajj Abdullah Rasheed) is about to be rescued from the obscurity which has engulfed him since he last recorded in 1960.

Nick Kimberley

VARIOUS ARTISTS

R&B Volts From The Vee-Jay Vaults (Charly R&B)
LARRY BIRDSONG: Fannie's Place; Ain't Nothing But A Fool; Goodbye Goodbye; I'll Run My Business. **DILLARD CRUME JR: It's You I Love; Rock'n'Roll Boogie.** **HANK BALLARD & THE MIDNIGHTERS: I'll Pray For You; The Twist.** **MISS MELLO & HEAVY DRAMA: Don't Be Careless.** **KIP ANDERSON: The Home Fires Are Brighter After All; I Wanna Be The Only One.** **THE FIVE ROYALES: Much In Need; They Don't Know; Help Me Somebody; Talk About My Woman Pts. 1&2.**

THE LINER notes make the reasonable observation that this material "seems as far out of left field as a body can get". Well yes, I do seem to have acquired an uncomfortable squint and I'm sure it's not just from boggling at the ontological improbability of Larry Birdsong and Dillard Crume Jr.

Actually, the four Chicago sides warbled enthusiastically by the former are delightful. The band comport themselves with fierce near-abandon while Larry, in full cry, sounds as if his sinuses are chock-full of ball-bearings. A quartet of rattling performances. Dillard's "It's You I Love" is filigreed doo-wop at its sensual, ever-so-slightly-campy best, though "Rock'n'Roll Boogie" cuts a rather underpowered figure in the rhythm-section. This is an accusation that could never be levelled at Hank Ballard & The Midnighters, who hump their way through a gaunt "I'll Pray For You" and the previously undiscovered original version of "The Twist".

Debate rages between the compilers as to whether Miss Mello & Heavy Drama (illusion, reality or a strange intermingling of the twin?) are really The Staple Singers. Me? I haven't a clue, but they have soul. Kip Anderson is so darned authentic, man, that he washes over me like 'authenticity' always does: in a despondent trickle. Heavy-duty guitarist, though.

Saving the best for last, The Five Royals treat this comparatively ignorant pair of ears with great respect. I've always liked The Royals because I like their texture. Three of these tunes turn up heavily disguised in other quarters of the R&B canon (Ray Charles, James Brown and, er, someone else) but "Much In Need" is an absolute and towering genre paradigm. Yes sir.

Knee-jerk R&B purchasers will go for this one willy-nilly and with great alacrity (I know; I am acquainted with far too many of them), while for normal people, Volts is recommended cautiously... with the rider that disbelief does not always come packaged so fruitfully.

Nick Coleman



LEE MORGAN

Here's Lee Morgan! (Affinity AFF143)
Recorded: New York City - 2 February 1960.
Terrible T; Mogie; I'm A Fool To Want You; Running Brook; Off Spring; Bess.
Morgan (tp): Clifford Jordan (as, ts); Wynton Kelly (p); Paul Chambers (b); Art Blakey (d).

CLIFFORD JORDAN

Repetition (Soul Note SN1084)
Recorded: New York City - 9 February 1984.
Third Avenue; Fun; Repetition; Evidence; Nostalgia; House Call; Quit'n Time.
Jordan (ts); Barry Harris (p); Walter Brook (b); Vernel Fournier (d).

THERE WERE several Morgans, and this is pretty much the one that we used to hear with the Messengers - which is unsurprising in view of who is behind the drums. This is, indeed, a typical hard bop session of its time, and its emotional directness probably retains a wide appeal. Morgan's style had crystallized, though, and he was well able to develop his ideas. In solos like those on the first two tracks his inventions are tightly packed and effectively contrasted; they are given a further edge by his fiercely vocalized tone. Jordan's fervour is attractive and he manages, at this stage, to be economical, as on "Running Brook"; he is also good in the pensive "Fool To Want You". Blakey of course varies his tactics for each solo and most ensembles, but making one percussive texture evolve with seeming naturalness out of another.

Turning to Jordan's own LP of two dozen years later, one appreciates the proper stereo separation between the instruments, although the Affinity is decently recorded in its way. The repertoire

is interesting: besides "Evidence" from Monk we find the Navarro-Dameron "Nostalgia" and Neal Hefti's "Repetition", which Parker recorded twice. This last is taken at a curiously slow tempo, reminding us of a similar treatment of Bud Powell's "Dance of the Infidels" on Harris's 1967 *Luminescence* LP for Prestige. Jordan at this late date has a considerably less purposeful drive, and is busier. Most of the consolations come from Harris, who responds to what in fact is an uncommonly well varied programme with notably more diverse thoughts than his leader.

Max Harrison

DIZZY GILLESPIE

Oo Pop A Da (Affinity AFF142)
Recorded: Monterey Jazz Festival - 23 September 1961.
Desafinado-2; Lorraine-2; Long, Long Summer; Oo Pop A Da-1; Pau de Arara; Kush.
Gillespie (t, v-1); Leo Wright (as, fl-2); Lalo Schiffrin (p); Bob Cunningham (b); Chuck Lampkin (d); Joe Carroll (v-1).

PERHAPS STIMULATED by a special occasion, Gillespie's tightly integrated band produces a better set than was usual during this period. It was supposedly a survey of musics that travelled from Africa to the Americas, but actually consists of genre pieces mainly by Gillespie with contributions from Schiffrin and Jobim. The latter's "Desafinado" was simply a bossa nova hit of the way, though it chimes well enough with the leader's south-of-the-border affinities, and he plays with muted intention. He does again in "Lorraine", and both these tracks have good flute by Wright; this instrument satisfies in Latin numbers to an extent that it rarely can in straight jazz.

Gillespie's mute finally comes out in "Summer", and to great effect in a soaring trumpet solo. There is fine alto by Wright, but Schiffrin gets a bit histrionic with the block chords. Confined to a very sustained vocal duet between Gillespie and Carroll, the eponymous "Oo Pop A Da" is a protracted bore - humour for people with no sense of humour, like Slim Gaillard. "Pau de Arara" has outstanding alto, and Wright again stars in "Kush". The former sets Gillespie going, also, and he surpasses the "Lorraine" outing. Lampkin and Cunningham generate a powerful swing, everybody is well recorded, and I gather from Alun Morgan's sleeve note that this music has not before been issued in the UK.

Max Harrison

LAJOS DUDAS

Sunshine State (Konnex ST5004)
Recorded: Cologne - November 1984.
Surfriding; For Gabor; Pacific Coast Highway; At Carmelo's; Back To LA; Que Tal, Carlos; 55 mph; No Dance.

Dudas (cl); Ernst Hartmann (kybds); Tote Blanke (g); Teodoszi Stoykov (b); Imre Koszegi (d).
(Obtainable from Konnex Records, Prinzenallee 47b, 1000 Berlin 65, Germany.)

THIS MARKS an advance on Dudas's *Reflections on Bach* (Metram 02216) or *Detour*, the first of his two Rayna LPs (Rayna 1003), being among other things more purposefully disciplined, less 'free' in the now-conventional sense, than the latter. He is as accomplished as any clarinetist now active in jazz this side of Boniface Ferdinand Leonardo de Franco, and it is interesting to hear the instrument in the context of electric keyboards, guitar and bass, as on the pleasingly titled "No Dance". Dudas produces an excellent tone throughout the entire register, and this is sensitively inflected; he has complete ease of movement and plenty of ideas, as displayed on "Pacific Coast Highway" and "At Carmelo's", where he performs with an engaging exuberance. Blanke is impressive also, as during "55 mph".

For too long jazz has failed to make a proper use of the clarinet's great resources, and it is to be hoped players like Dudas will at last change that. Certainly this record deserves to be heard. Besides, Dudas is the sort of person that plays jazz one day, Weber's Clarinet Quartet the next, and you know how much that sort of thing annoys some people...

Max Harrison

UMO NEW MUSIC ORCHESTRA

Plays the Music of Koivisto and Linkola (Finnlevy FL5123)
Recorded: Helsinki, 20-22 May 1985.
Eero Koivisto: *El Viejo Almacén*; Jukka Linkola: *Ben Bay; One For TS; Syrene*. Esko Linnavalli (cond, synth); Pentti Lahti, Teemu Salminen, Eero Koivisto, Juhani Aaltonen, Uto Haapa-aho (reeds); Simo Salminen, Esko Heikkinen, Jorgen Petersen, Heikki Haimila, Markku Johansson (t); Markku Veijonsuo, Mircea Stan, Juhani Aalto, Mikael Langbacka (tbn); Thomas Clausen (kybds); Otto Berger, Jarno Kukkonen (g); Pekka Sarmanto (b); Heikki Virtanen (el b); Esko Rosnell, Jukka Uotila (d); Mongo Aaltonen (perc).

UMO (THE initials are Finnish for New Music Orchestra) is an admirable unit with a work-rate and a sponsorship set-up that should be an example and a shame to big bands elsewhere. The disappointment with this album is that such energies and ability should be frittered on such thoroughly undistinguished material.

On every track the orchestrations and arrangements are as sharply disciplined and imaginative as anyone might hope. Unfortunately, there's precious little to

work with; the contrast with the performances on Edward Vesala's *Bad Luck, Good Luck* (reviewed Wire 21) is depressing. Koivisto's Latinate piece sounds ersatz to me and certainly isn't strong enough to merit the 'composer' treatment implied in the album title. Individual solos, notably Thomas Clausen's, come off well but not sufficiently well to redeem the score.

Side two is stronger, largely because Kinkola's ambitions seem more restrained. Solos by altoist Pentti Lahti (and Clausen again) add a bit of propulsion but, otherwise, not much of note.

UMO is better than this suggests. Big bands depend so completely on their charts that they'll need to look for stronger foundations than these. Everything else is on their side.

Brian Morton

BILLY JENKINS WITH THE VOICE OF GOD COLLECTIVE

Greenwich (Wood Wharf WWR 852)
Recorded: Rotherhithe, 1985.
Greenwich One Way System; Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital; Rope; Arrival Of The Tourists; An Empty River; Meridian; Council Estate (Vandalise Tourists' Property, Not Residents); Discobots At Two O'Clock. Jenkins (g); Skid Solo (t); Iain Ballamy (as, ts); Dai Pritchard (as, bs, bs cit); Steve Berry (b); Roy Dodds (d); Dawson (perc); VOG string trio.

ANYONE WHO'S tried to do a bit of training round Greenwich will know the feeling. You're jogging along, quite the thing and of a sudden, like the chicken, fancy the other side of the road. Ten strides and you're in a J.G. Ballard novel. Volvos and M-reg Capris to the crack of doom. No way back.

It's brave, if unlikely, to record such experiences musically but Jenkins and the VOGs have come close (closer than on the duff *Sounds Like Bromley*) to pulling it off without bathos.

"Greenwich One Way System" is a bit of engaging nonsense, all car horns and squeaky brakes. "Arrival Of The Tourists", dedicated to another runner's peril, the cunningly miniaturised Japanese who swarm round the Cutty Sark looking for interesting angles (like under the soles of my Nikes), stands a bit more on its own merits and jollies along quite nicely. The real stand-out track, and ample recompense for any longeurs or irritations in the chirp numbers, is the moody "Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital" replete with chesty bass clarinet, rheumatically bass and trombone. Marvellous stuff altogether.

By side two, the band have settled into somewhat less self-conscious form and turn in three steadier tracks. "Tone Poem" may be coming it a bit strong, but, along with "Dreadnought", "An Empty River" shows a nice facility for catching moods

and evoking scenes; Charles Ives and Debussy weren't above this sort of thing.

Instrumentally, Jenkins has found a nice blend with the VOG. His guitar playing never gets too flash, all the horns are good and the string trio adds an interesting shade here and there. It will be interesting to hear the Collective in concert; I'd reserve final judgement till then. So far, it's about even. I love this, hated *Bromley*, and had to mark the solo Jenkins *Piano Sketches* void on my coupon. *Vox dei, vox populi* est: could be.

Brian Morton



XERO SLINGSBY & THE WORKS

Shove It (Paan Produktion Efa 6217/12 LP)
Recorded: Café Click, Essen, 23 March 1985.
Shove It; Orangu Tango; The Mauve Mercedes With The Padlock On The Boot; Hurricane Damage In Leeds; Three Men In A Tub; Revenge Of The Kerbstones; Out Of The Indoor; Out Of The Wok; Tom Waits For No Man; Dearly Beloved; Pixieland. Xero Slingsby (as, 'associate cacophony'); Louis Colan (b, el b); Gene Velocette (d).

XERO SLINGSBY is a kind of jazz Billy Bragg, and just about as threatening. "Shove It" is introduced to the German audience as "a major onslaught on the Conservative Party of Great Britain and all other governments". There's not much ferocity in what follows, though, rather a striped-down, slightly punky cynicism well varnished with good humour: "Tom Waits For No Man". Indeed.

The Kern/Mercer "Dearly Beloved" seems a bit of an oddity in this company, but it gets a more or less respectful treatment and underlines the Works' preference for neat, easily capsuled song-forms over extended soloing.

The parts are minimal - no virtuosos here - but they manage to get into something highly appealing. The very absence of technical flash is one of the band's strong points. Everything is completely to the case in hand. And case in hand the Works will do well round the clubs of Europe. They are brisk, breezy and competent, just what you'd want to hear over a half-dozen lagers.

C H E C K

The 'associate cacophony' – mostly synthesized, but with the odd vocal – doesn't break the mood too much and serves to do no more than flatten up the sound a bit. Xero's sax is echt! But alto, with that same spiky edge and lyrical centre you get with the old firm, Watts, Dean, Warfield & Osborne, Louis Colan does better on the bass guitar than on his upright. Velocette revs away and offers lifts. All three, remarkably for a club recording, are perfectly audible and balanced.

Suspiciously prominent among the associate cacophony is the Jamitar bee-baw of what they call a law enforcement vehicle aural early warning facility. The cover features a disarming, caption comp. portrait of Xero in earnest conversation with his community policeman, who is reaching somewhat sinisterly for an inside pocket. No busking here, mate? Can I have your autograph? Do you know you look just like Simon Galloway? This is the most powerful handgun in the world. Now do you feel lucky, punk?

Showe it was recorded in Germany. Are the Works on the lam? If so, an amnesty seems called for and I insist *The Wire* offers them political asylum. They seem such nice lads.

Brian Morton

NOVOTNY, KLAFENBOCK, SHARROCK, POLYMENAKOS, FIELDS, HAINDL, ISALAH

Jazz For Thinkers
(K Kovarik's Musikothek
KKM 1013)

Recorded: 26 January 1985.
Ballad; Ednigeis; Voice;
Inside; Taster; Andrea.
Linda Sharrock (v); Fritz
Novotny (fls, reeds, p, perc);
Richard Isalah (tbn); Niko
Polymenakos (keys, tapes);
Paul Fields (vln, p); Andrea
Haindl (g); Harry
Klafenböck (b).

THOUGH NOT billed as a Taster album, *Jazz For Thinkers* comes from that latest in the lineage of Vienna free jazz groups to descend from Fritz Novotny's Reform Art Unit and the Masters Of Unorthodox Jazz, and such later groupings as Three Motions and Wide Fields.

The album reasserts the basic democracy of a group who have repeatedly rejected the label 'free jazz' in favour of 'unorthodox jazz'. Their initial premise is that all music (even the ultra-ultra-systematizations of the 20th-century Vienna school of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg) contains some important element of freedom. Given that, it seems unnecessary to flog freedom too hard. Thus, they insist, is 'overground' music, no hidden equations, no subterranean philosophies.

It is also intensely beautiful. 'Ballad' opens with jangling violin from Fields and a spoken vocal from Linda Sharrock that quickly fragments into a series of whispers, moans and throaty rattles. The remainder of the first side is dominated by Isalah's full-chested trombone, Novotny's flute (notably on 'Voice', where Sharrock, ironically, takes a back seat) and by Harry Klafenböck's bass which, freed from the usual rhythm pairing with drums, is given a genuine rather than contrived freedom and moves forward in the overall sound.

'Inside' opens with flute and a first

identifiable contribution from Andrea Haindl's guitar. Bass, synthesizer, voice join in to form a piece with a strong Eastern feel that never quite settles to any regular time or obvious melodic development. Indeed, the absence of constant percussion recedes the music; while everything is foregrounded, each instrument takes on its own percussive role.

Linda Sharrock's voice is strongly reminiscent of Meredith Monk's, agile, dramatic, always on the verge of some imagined or half-remembered speech. Collectively – and for once the term is wholly justified – the band produce that same sense of musical theatre you find in Monk, never wholly abstract, never programmatic, never, except for moments on the anthem 'Taster', stretching for effect. The final track, 'Andrea', is the most obviously accessible piece, but by no means the least typical. Even in its relatively conventional dynamics, it retains the mystery of the rest.

Vienna is as far musically from Western Europe as Europe is from America. The impact of the East begins almost as soon as you cross the Elbe. It's hard to judge how much *Jazz For Thinkers* depends on or is assimilable to the jazz tradition. Certainly those British and Americans who have worked with the Reform Art Unit and its kin have been those – Braxton, Lacy, Cymille, Sharrock, Evan Parker, Lou Coxhill – with a decidedly heterodox approach to the music.

The Viennese tradition veers from the hyper-intellectual to the emotionally vapid, but in surprising combinations. Few composers could be as mellifluous romantic and chromatic as Schoenberg; Johann Strauss might almost have composed by computer, so schematic and formulaic were his melodies and arrangements. *Jazz For Thinkers* falls within that same paradox: 'overground' avant-garde, experimental sentimentalism, not a combination we like to recognize in the farther West where head and heart still refuse to acknowledge one another. It seems right that one of the most promising and self-conscious East-West fusions should come from the heartland of the European classical tradition.

Brian Morton

VARIOUS ARTISTS Blues And Rhythm Midnight Matinee

(Route 66 Kix-1200)
Recorded: Olympic
Auditorium, Los Angeles, 29
September and 6 October,
1951.

Smilin' Smokey Lynn: I Was Born to Rock; Floyd Dixon: Telephone Blues; Bixie Crawford: I Get The Blues When It Rains; Peppermint Harris: I Got Loaded; Golden Keys: Noah; Duke Henderson: Low Down Dog; Cecil 'Count' Carter: Out Of Count; Ernie Andrews: The Masquerade Is Over; Madelyn Perkins: What Is This Thing Called Love; Floyd Dixon: Chicken Shack Boogie; Betty Jean Washington: Elevator Boogie; Golden Keys: Dry Bones; Duke Henderson: We're Gonna Rock; Big Jay McNeely: Deacon's Hop.

LIVE LPS give a unique opportunity to find out what people actually pay money to go out and see. Live R&B LPs from the 50s are almost unheard of – for that reason alone, *Blues And Rhythm Midnight Matinee* is fascinating.

Hunter Hancock was a white radio dj who, in the late 40s, switched from playing jazz to playing the newly emerging 'blues and rhythm'. At the time, low black djs were on the air. Hancock, like the more celebrated Alan Freed, was vital in creating a white, and a black audience. In 1951 he was called in to present a series of weekly shows at Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium. These 'Blues and Rhythm Midnight Matinees' would showcase 'the finest negro talent in Southern California'. The first half-hour of each show would be broadcast on KMPC. Probably because the Olympic was too vast, only two shows took place; it's (more or less) the broadcast segments which we have here.

Hancock, assisted by black dj Ray Robinson, calls each performer out for one number only with the house band (different on each side). The aim was clearly to mix hot acts with purely local talent. Unfortunately, too many of the locals are merely of their time: Boze Crawford and Madelyn Perkins may have had stage presence, glamour or whatever, but it's lost here. Ernie Andrews is simply slushy – although an excited woman cries out, 'Ah, sing it, Ernie!'. But, as Jim Dawson's sleeve points out, the music ranged broadly across lush ballads, acappella gospel, raucous r&b – whatever people wanted.

Floyd Dixon and Peppermint Harris perform their biggest hits of the time with vigour, while Big Jay McNeely is as boisterous as we've come to expect. But the real stars are The Golden Keys, a gospel group in the middle of some very carnal music. Their complex harmony and timing are mesmerizing, whether acappella or with a rhythm section. Historically they were minor, but the discovery of these two tracks is a major event for gospel fans.

Both bands play well; Maxwell Davis in particular leads his band in line style with his own blasting solos supported by Chuck Norris' inventive guitar. And Hunter Hancock shows that he was one of the first great AM-shouters, gurgling and screaming to whip an already enthusiastic audience into greater frenzy. The received notion is that white djs like Hancock and Freed simply borrowed from black djs. I'm not so sure; as mentioned, black djs were rare then. The hysterical on-air style was probably as much a minority white phenomenon as it was black.

The sound is less than perfect, as the acetates from which the LP was cut were tucked away in a closet for thirty years. That only adds to the atmosphere – and, more than music, it's atmosphere which makes the record. That, and the Golden Keys' 'Noah'.

Nick Kimberley

FROGMAN'S VIEW

Xpact
(Ukklang UK5)
Recorded: Berlin, Germany,
18/19 December 1983.

... We Start Now; The Crack Is Fierce; The Broken Key; To Goosenecks ...; Der Blick Des Tauchers.
Wolfgang Fuchs (sno, sax, clt, bs-clt); Erhard Hirt (g); Hans Schneider (b); Paul Lytton (dr, perc, live electronics).

PRIMARILY Paul Lytton and – to a lesser extent – Wolfgang Fuchs are improvisors whose work is known in the UK, through live appearances and recordings, but this release gives an insight, or glimpse, into that of Erhard Hirt and Hans Schneider too.

It does so over two substantial tracks (one covering the whole of the first side) and three brief snippets all under two-and-a-half minutes in length. These short tracks open the second side. The first swells tidily, the second is all fluttering detail which almost appears to build into the third track. The latter turns a more robust, inflammable music on a similar axis, although the tracks were recorded a day apart with just one of them as part of a live concert.

The longer selections give more opportunity to appreciate the inner dynamics and interaction within the group. They leave no doubt that this is emphatically a quartet music; material is introduced and bounced between the participants, picked up or discarded, as the music edges forward with a sure sense of (corporate) direction in which ideas intersect and interact.

In "We Start Now" a direction takes form in the midst of a groping, low-key staccato introduction, coalescing around sour, high-pitched drones and agitated interjections. The track indicates, too, a delightfully curdled sense of melody as it leads eventually to Hirt's fragmentary pizzicato guitar piercing Schneider's arco bass dance and Fuchs' tender-toned bass clarinet. The progression of moods which follow each other through "Der Blick Des Tauchers" includes delicacy and sustain which bubbles into a quagmire of rich turmoil and detail, the group pulls back and establishes a brooding sense of foreboding which in its turn fractures in a welter of scattershot activity encompassing shards of bright, stinging guitar, popping and barking saxophone and catalytic bass and drums.

This is an album of confident, assured music-making; one which introduces new names to this listener, at least, and re-affirms once more that improvised music is in a very healthy state.

Kenneth Ansell

THE DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

My Feet Can't Fail Me Now
Recorded: Bogaloussa, Louisiana 1984.

Blackbird Special; Do It Fluid; I Ate Up The Apple Tree; Bongo Beep; Blue Monk; Caravan; St James Infirmary; L'il Liza Jane; Mary, Mary; My Feet Can't Fail Me Now.

Gregory Davis (t, snare drum); Efreem Towns (t); Kevin Harris (ts); Roger Lewis (bs, ss); Charles Joeseeph (tbn); Kirk Joeseeph (tuba); Jenell Marshall (snare drum, v); Benny Jones (bass d); Lionel Batiste (perc).

THE DIRTY Dozen Brass Band appeal simultaneously to the head and feet, and it's difficult to imagine anyone listening to this, their first album, without a smile of pure pleasure. No doubt the poor soul exists whose taste is so rigidly pigeon-holed that the whole point of this band would be lost, but for the rest, this is a refreshing blast from New Orleans, circa 1985. The Dirty Dozen (all eight

of them, Lionel Batiste has now replaced Benny Jones on bass drum) have absorbed the New Orleans tradition and stood it on its head, about the only thing they have in common with the likes of the Eureka, Adamant, Olympia and Onward is that they perform in New Orleans street parades. Otherwise they are closer to the World Saxophone Quartet, Professor Longhair, bebop and funk than the venerable and fossilized tradition of Crescent City marching bands.

Initially other bands objected to their inclusion of "Bongo Beep", "Blue Monk" and their own originals, but the second liners loved it, and the point of departure was born. Gone is the familiar heterogeneous polyphony and in its place are well-crafted arrangements, with the busy push-me-pull-you effect of WSO's "Hattie Wall". Well to the fore in the mix is Kirk Joeseeph's tuba, so agile that it can easily be mistaken for an electric bass – as he intends. Not so good is the decision to make the bass drum and snare drum almost inaudible – live, the band swing creditably on this unusual three-man rhythm section. All is not lost, however, as the band create their own special brand of excitement on "Blackbird Special", "I Ate Up The Apple Tree" and "My Feet Can't Fail Me Now".

The title track comes complete with an interpretation of "The Theme" and is a perfect example of jazz renewing itself from its own traditions. It all sounds so logical that the surprise is that it hasn't been done before – much like, I suppose, everyone felt when the wheel was invented.

Stuart Nicholson



KENNY BURRELL

Midnight Blue
(Blue Note BST 84123)
Recorded: 1963.
Chittlin' Con Carne; Mule; Soul Lament; Midnight Blue; Wavy Gravy; Gee Baby Ain't I Good To You; Saturday Night Blues.
Stanley Turrentine (ts); Kenny Burrell (g); Major Holley Jr (b); Bill English (d); Ray Barreto (cga).

NO MASTERPIECE, but this is a midnight classic in its quiet way. All the music is stroked, even with the punching Turrentine on hand, and Burrell keeps it all in his pocket. The tempos range from a soft shuffle to one notch above a complete standstill; the blues are pale, muttered out by the players. A term like 'after hours' was

coined for such a session.

Burrell's style isn't one which engages the listener, but he plays with such certainty that the music eventually becomes insistent. His chords keep the melodies omnipresent while the single string lines embellish the theme almost reluctantly. The tenor hardly has a part to play. Turrentine gets off a few funky phrases in "Mule", for instance, which are as speedily quelled by the rhythm section's reticence in picking up the beat. And that's the idea.

You can tell where they're at by the feeling put into Don Redman's regretful "Gee Baby Ain't I Good To You" – a pop blues performed in pastels. But "South Lament", a guitar solo with (deliberately?) banal flamenco overtones, makes you wonder what Burrell would do over an entire one-man album. The mood wrought here is doleful in a different way. It's an opportunity, though, which never seems to have come his way.

Richard Cook

THE HAPPY END

There's Nothing Quite Like Money

(Circus RING L100)
Recorded: London 1985.
March From Niemandland; Der Kanonensong; There's Nothing Quite Like Money; Viva La Quince Brigada; The Love Market; La Partida; The East Is Red; The Song Of Mandalay; The Circus Band 1894; Surabaya Johnny; Hasta Siempre (Comandante Che Guevara); On Suicide; Solidarity Song.
Glen Gordon, Lydie Drouillet, Angus Avison (t); Roger Goslyn (fr-hn, acc); Richard Avison, Paul Ferguson, Yolanda Armstrong (tbn); Ben Higham (tuba); Adrian Northover, Peter Boyce, Rob Ogleby, Phil Hall (as); Sue Lynch (ts, gong); Rachel Bartlett (ts); Nick Catermole (bs, f, pan pipes); Adam Flowers (ss, bs); Mat Fox (ss, ts, bs); Caroline Hall (vib, ct); Adrian Wakeling (b); Tim Walmesley (d, perc); Paul Ferguson (v on 1 & 2); Sarah-Jane Morris (v).

WEILL and Eisler's third-stream music is of course exhausted as anything but concert music by now. These are not its times. Stealing effects at both ends, from the formalist decadence of the Vienna School and the nightclub decadence of Jazz, it fails to rise, ever, to the dense emotional expression of Alban Berg on the one hand and Duke on the other. Indeed it rarely gets more profound than parodies of military pomp – not an especially tricky target these days, or unusual. The Happy End are reported to be immense fun live – as indeed are most Brass Bands of every political stripe – but their presentation on record is soured by smug irony and feebly uncritical nostalgia for the radical commitment of bygone times: from dead Weimar Communism to the Cultural Revolution. As if weeping could bring them

C H E C K

back (do we want them back?).

The music is no sort of a frontier – but they miss their political aim as well, through lack of rigour. Miss an excellent chance to throw up questions: 'the complex intertwining of individual and collective expression, art-music and mass-music, the move across revolutionary and people's and popular and pop music, the relationships between music for pleasure and music of purpose, the differences (if any) between musics of the heart and musics of the mind. Bricht, 'we should remember, gracelessly and deliberately cut all rhetoric from his work, all tricks of theatre – to make us think – but mostly he seems to be used as a puppet of jerked emotion these days: his provocative celebrations of crime's gleam, and the amorality of the hungry, are lost under waves of automatic thoughtless response. They put him next to lives here – which could have been inspired – but appear to lack any sense of the enormous aesthetic tension the two set up. They also put "The East Is Red" by Victor Jara's "La Partida". I think of his torture and murder at the hands of the Chilean military, and then of the Red Guards smashing the hands of Chinese musicians who had failed to give up performing their traditional music.

Engagement before enjoyment, citizen. Sit up straight and take just criticism. This record inspires me to serious carping – you were of course displaying laziness deliberately to test me? For my next test I'd like something a little more thought-through, please.

Mark Sinker

FREDDIE HUBBARD

Hub-Tones
(Blue Note BST 84115)
Recorded: 1962.
You're My Everything;
Prophet Jennings;
Hub-Tones; Lament for Booker;
For Spee's Sake.
Freddie Hubbard (t); James Spaulding (as, flt); Herbie Hancock (p); Reginald Workman (b); Clifford Jarvis (d).

JOE GOLDBERG's anxiously proselytizing sleeve note to Hub-Tones drops names furiously, as if desperate to establish a niche for the young Hubbard. A promising hard bopper under the Blakey wing, he had absorbed something of Miles Davis's modal approach as well as his lyrical tone, his previous album had featured an impeccably Coltrane pedigree; he had worked with Ornette Coleman.

Goldberg's implication is that Hubbard is forging something new from these conjunctions; fastening to the album, it's difficult to avoid the suspicion that he was grasping after not quite fulfilled intimations behind the music. That is not to suggest that it is a bad record (I liked it more than I expected I would); rather, it is an attempt to respond to a resolutely solid session which threatens to break through into something more – and never quite gets there. Which may be the story of Freddie Hubbard's life.

"Hub-Tones" is the album's busiest track, and Hubbard's most telling solo outing, structured around a continuously

repeated blues phrase given an energetic treatment by the band, although Clifford Jarvis' solo is surplus to requirements. Herbie Hancock is impressive throughout, and is instrumental in helping Hubbard sustain the elegiac mood of the album's longest and most impressive cut, "Lament for Booker", a moving tribute to trumpeter Booker Little.

Hubbard has always seemed more effective as a sideman than as leader, whether playing against the grain as on Dolphy's *Out to Lunch*, or in a more comfortable setting like Hancock's *Maiden Voyage*, to cite two recent distinguished re-issues in this series. Hub-Tones doesn't change my mind, but it does demonstrate that the disciplined Blue Note sessions brought out the best in a player who, in the (confusions of his later career, has never fulfilled the promise they suggested.

Kenny Mathieson



RUBEN BLADES Y SEIS DEL SOLAR

Escenas (Scenes)
(Elektra EKT 29 960432-1)
Recorded: New York/LA – 1985.
Cuenta Del Alma; Tierra Dura; La Cancion Del Final Del Mundo; Sorpresas; Caina; Silencios; Muevete.
Ruben Blades (v, perc); Oscar Hernandez (p, synth); Ricardo Marrero (p, synth, perc); Eddy Montalvo (tumbadoras); Ralph Irizarry (timbales, perc); Luis Rivera (bongos, g); Robert Ameen (d); Mike Vinas (b); Joe Jackson (synth); Linda Ronstadt (vcls).

UNCOMPROMISING LYRICS combined with unconventional, dramatic arrangements have won Ruben Blades a unique position, not just in New York's Salsa hierarchy, but within Latin America as a whole. His move from the Fania empire to Elektra was a significant stab at a wider market and *Buscando America* a landmark in Hispanic music. The arrival of its successor *Escenas (Scenes)* was the cause of some trepidation but its rippling, racy dance rhythms, lush ballads and lyrical incursions into the heart of barrio existence left this listener heaving a sigh of relief.

If you're expecting a dose of steamy Salsa in the Palmieri-Barretto mould then forget it. Gone are the horns and strings as Blades' sepiet, *Seis Del Solar*, drop it in a

different style. Sumptuous synthesizers are twinned with layers of percussion and despite some nagging reservations, they create taut, modernist settings for Blades' "Escenas".

Blades never shrinks from portraying lives wracked with loneliness and sadness, but neither is he afraid of celebrating that unwillingness to succumb and give in. "Heart Dues" opens the set and sets the scene, a distressing tale told amid a sea of percussion, meteoric piano and sweeping use of synthesizer, whose initial alienness retreats with each play.

"Sorpresas" is a chilling tale of suspense and murder that resurrects the spectre of that gold-toothed barrio hustler, Pedro Navaja, from his excellent *Siembra* album, while "Silencios" features the unlikely combination of Blades and Linda Ronstadt. It possesses a certain poignancy but does come perilously close to sub-Barbra Streisand, a possible UK chart-topper.

"Muevete" is a fitting climax, an exhilarating clarion call to unity and resistance against the evil that crushes freedom and truth from Soweto to El Salvador. Blades knows that his music in itself will not change the world but his firm intention of contributing to a modern Hispanic folklore ensures that his songs stir the consciousness and provoke a questioning. That in itself is quite an achievement.

Paul Bradshaw

HAROLD LAND

Harold In The Land Of Jazz
(Boplicity/Contemporary COP008)
Recorded: Los Angeles – 13/14 January 1958.
Speak Low; Lydia's Lament; Smack Up; Delirium; You Don't Know What Love Is; Nieta; Grooveyard.
Rolf Ericson (t); Land (ts); Carl Perkins (p); Leroy Vinnegar (b); Frank Butler (d).

THIS LP has the right people on it yet has not worn so consistently well as one had assumed. Land imparts good shape to the earlier sections of his improvisations, thinking several moves ahead, but then tends to run out of real ideas – sooner on "Delirium", later on "Speak Low". His tenor solo on the former is mainly bits and pieces, and, to a lesser extent, is Encon's. The "Speak Low" trumpet solo is better: outwardly fragmentary, it worries the melody from several different angles. Perkins takes one of a number of good solos on "Delirium", and in fact the rhythm section provides this record's most consistently distinguished music. Butler is excellently recorded, and one is always aware of his constant and intense involvement with the detail of what each soloist is doing. Land's line is much better sustained in "You Don't Know", and there are no loose ends.

The originals, by him, Perkins and Elmo Hope, are an interesting batch, "Lament", by Land, having attractive ensembles, with soft trumpet and tenor lines at equal strength. "Grooveyard" was said in Nat Hentoff's original 1958 sleeve notes for this disc to be Perkins's last composition – the parast died in the March after these sessions, at the age of 29. He takes the first solo, a long and

especially personal one with line continuity; Enerson, muted, maintains the communing mood; Land fades in and out, is okay, but uses stock phrases. More such are put together particularly well on "Smack Up" (not to be confused with "Smack", recorded by the Chocolate Dandies in 1940). Enerson again has worthwhile ideas here, and Butler dominates in the fours.

Max Harrison

LARRY VUCKOVICH TRIO AND QUARTET

Blues For Red
(Hot House HH1001)
Recorded: 26–27 August 1983 – Trio tracks 27
December 1984.
Blues For Red; Invitation;
Mostar Bridge; Ballad
Medley; Freebop; Alcide
Meets El Cid; Stella By
Starlight.
Dusko Goykovich (t);
Charles McPherson (as);
Larry Vuckovich (p); Larry
Grenadier (b); Eddie
Marshall (d).

IF EVERY album you buy has to present an inscrutable challenge, rattle the bars of your philosophical cage or yield a thousand subjective meanings, move on to the next review. If, on the other hand, you are plugging the gaps in your collection with Blue Note audiophile repressings, read on. Although recorded in the eighties, these Larry Vuckovich trios, quartet and quintets seem to have popped out of a late sixties time warp. Authentic, well-executed bop is not that common on the ground it can be taken for granted, and this release on Mole Jazz's new label will appeal to both new converts to jazz (courtesy of Tommy Chase's finishing school) as well as those well versed in the Blue Note groove.

Vuckovich developed a reputation among musicians at San Francisco's Keystone Korner jazz club, where as house pianist he backed the distinguished soloists who passed through the late lamented club's portals. His robust, businesslike style is featured on three trio outings, his quietly competent resources marshalled cunningly to withstand the searching scrutiny of the trio format. A quartet version of "Stella By Starlight" features Charles McPherson, a second-generation bopper who was swept aside by successive tides of free jazz and jazz rock, but kept his razor-sharp attack and technique intact. On the remaining three tracks the line-up becomes a quintet with the addition of Dusko Goykovich (who contributed a memorable trumpet solo on Woody Herman's latterday classic "Opus de Funk" from 1955). Idiomatically, therefore, this album is sure-footed, but original it ain't ("Freebop" for example uses part of the "Maiden Voyage" vamp). Preserving the tradition of bop in the eighties has become blurred by listeners' expectations which have increased in tandem with innovation, individualism and idiosyncrasy; but if there's a chink in your heightened perceptions, then *Blues For Red* comes recommended.

Stuart Nicholson



ROY ELDRIDGE

Tippin' Out
(Affinity AFSD1016, 2 LPs)
Recorded: Chicago – 16
November 1943.
The Gasser; Jump Through
The Window; Minor Jive;
Stardust.
Roy Eldridge (t); Joe
Eldridge, Andrew Gardner
(as); Ike Quebec, Tom Archia
(ts); Rozelle Gayle (p); Ted
Sturgis (b); Doc West (d).

Recorded: New York City –
26 June 1944.

I Can't Get Started; After
You've Gone; Body And
Soul.
Roy Eldridge, Gus Aiken,
John 'Bugs' Hamilton,
Robert 'Cookie' Mason,
Clarence Wheeler (t);
George Wilson, Ted Kelly,
Sandy Williams (tb); Joe
Eldridge, Sam Lee (as);
Franz Jackson, Hal Singer
(ts); Dave McRae (bs); Tony
d'Amore (p); Sam Allen (g);
Carl Wilson (b); Les Erskine
(d).

Recorded: New York City –
13 October 1944.

Fish Market; Twilight Time.
Roy Eldridge, Sidney
deParis, Paul Cohen, Mason,
Pinky Savitt (t); Wilbur
deParis, Williams, Vic
Dickenson, George
Stevenson (tb); Joe
Eldridge, Curley Alexander
(as); Jackson, Singer (ts);
McRae (bs); Humphrey 'Ted'
Brannon (p); Eugene 'Snags'
Allen (g); Billy Taylor snr (b);
Cozy Cole (d).

Recorded: New York City – 5
March 1945.

Little Jazz Boogie;
Embraceable You.
Eldridge, Andy Ferretti,
Yank Lawson, Bill Graham,
Jimmy Maxwell (t); Hal
Matthews, Will Bradley,
Ward Silallow, Fred Ohms
(tb); Ray Eckstrand, Mike
Doty (as); Don Purviance,
Hank Ross (ts); Ernie
Caceres (bs); Dave Bowman
(p); Mike Bryan (g); Sturgis
(b); Cole (d).

Recorded: New York City –
31 January 1946.

Baby, That'll Be The Day; All
The Cats Join In; Poor John;
Ain't That A Shame?
Eldridge, Henry Clay, Tom
Grider, Elmon Wright, Elton
Hill (t); Al Riding, John
McConnell, George
Robinson, Sandy Watson
(tb); Chris Johnson, Porter
Kilbert (as); George Lawson,
Charles Bowen (ts); Al
Townsend (bs); Buster
Harding (p, arr); Lucius
Fowler (g); Rodney
Richardson (b); Mel
Saunders (d).

Recorded: New York City – 7
May 1946.

Hi Ho, Trailblaze Boot Whip;
Tippin' Out; Yard Dog; Les
Bounce.
Eldridge, Clay, Grider,
Wright, Jim Thomas (t);
Riding, Robinson, Watson,
Nat Atkins (tb); Johnson,
Sahib Shihab (as); Archia, Al
Green (ts); Townsend (bs);
Harding (p, arr); 'Snags'
Allen (g); Lord Carrington
(b); Earl Phillips (d).

Recorded: New York City –
24 September 1946.

Lover, Come Back To Me;
Rockin' Chair; It's The Talk
Of The Town; I Surrender,
Dear.
Roy Eldridge, Grider, Dave
Page, Marion Hazel,
Sylvester Lewis (t); Fred
Robinson, Richard Dunlap,
Charlie Greenlee, George
Robinson (tb); Joe Eldridge,
Shihab (as); Walt Lockhart,
Harold Webster (ts); Cecil
Payne (bs); Duke Jordan (p);
Carl Pruitt (b); Lee
Abramson (d).
*Note: the titles of "The
Gasser" and "Stardust" are
reversed on both sleeve and
label.*

PERHAPS SOME people still dismiss Eldridge as the man who supplied the high notes at countless Granz concerts. Yet, far from being a mere Squealer at the Philharmonic, he is one of the great trumpeters of jazz, and in his time a significantly innovative one. His lasting reputation will be founded on records made in the 1930s and '40s, above all, perhaps, on those listed above. This set carries his complete 1943–46 series for Decca (except for a long-lost "St Louis Blues"), and is the finest Eldridge issue ever to appear locally. It is essential to any serious collection and should be prefaced with *Roy Eldridge: The Early Years* (CBS 88585, 2 LPs), which was dealt with in an excellent piece by Brian Priestley in the Autumn 1983 number of this magazine.

Long since (*Down Beat*, September 19 1956) has Eldridge acknowledged his debt to saxophonists, particularly Benny Carter and Coleman Hawkins, and throughout his work here one is conscious of an interplay between saxophone flexibility and trumpet

C H E C K

martial arts. For this listen not only to the rapid-fire outbursts of "After You've Gone" but also to quieter pieces like "Stardust". Also, the slow pieces as much as the fast demonstrate the nuances of tone, articulation, dynamics and intonation that make his improvisations so richly expressive. There are many passages of surpassing brilliance, and although this music is more overtly disciplined than some of the earlier recordings now on CBS, it retains an air of genuine high-risk adventure. As in the best/worst mountaineering situations, it seems that at any moment the leader may pitch to disaster, yet he never does. Henry Allen notwithstanding, such playing must have sounded wild indeed in the context of its time.

Only "Little Jazz Boogie" makes a mainly orchestral impact, the band otherwise providing powerful springboards for Eldridge's virtuosic flights. On a few tracks such as "Minor Jive" (aside from an interesting Gayle piano solo) and "Twilight Time" he plays almost throughout. Solos by others, even Quebec on "The Gasser" and Kilbert on "All The Cats", tend to be rather incidental in effect. Most of the themes, standards aside, are by Eldridge and/or Harding, and their quality is such as to lead one to forgive the quite expendable singing in which both occasionally indulge. It is, incidentally, worth comparing this "Lover, Come Back To Me" with the version Gillespie recorded two years later, though, as you should have gathered, the trumpeting throughout this set is by no means Dizzy predecessor. **Max Harrison**

ROBERT CRAY BAND

False Accusations
(Demon FIEND 43)
Recorded: Los Angeles — 1985.

Porch Light; Change Of Heart; She's Gone; Playing In The Dirt; I've Slipped Her Mind; False Accusations; The Last Time; Paying For It Now; Sonny.

Robert Cray (v, g); Richard Cousins (el b); Peter Boe (kbd); David Olson (d); David Li (ts); Dennis Walker (t).

MODERN BLUES has found a young torchbearer. For those of this reviewer's generation who have long since despaired of seeing the emergence of a major bluesman younger than they are, the arrival of 32-year-old Robert Cray is heartening. For any blues fan, his music is a revelation: and it's a music which has propelled Cray out of the small-clubs-and-specialist-magazines world which is the habitual lot of the blues artist into venues such as the Hammersmith Odeon.

Cray does not play only 12-bar blues; he also distills the essence of soul music, stripping it of its electronic funk and exhortations to breakdown. With his cohesive, unobtrusive but satisfying backing group, he blends elements of the two styles into a brew which defies categorization, but which is consistently fresh and surprising.

The somewhat passé expression "backing group" is used advisedly. Good they may be, but there's no doubt who is

the star of this LP. His voice, mid-range, sometimes comfortable and sometimes aching with anguish, and his guitar, clean and fluent, crisp and mordant but moody and dangerous when required, carry off most of the honours.

The nine songs, two-thirds of which bear his name as composer or co-composer, are strong vehicles upon which Cray's talent can ride. Like Jerry Williams a decade ago, he seems obsessed with depicting affairs of the heart as short-fused time bombs, or at best as brief sunny periods followed by tears running down the window pane. On the slow-burning blues "Playing In The Dirt", he's the adulterer realizing his sins but unable to escape from the woman's spell; on the Bobby Bland-ish soul ballad "I've Slipped Her Mind", he's the jilted suitor sitting alone at a table for two. "Change Of Heart" has him bemoaning a relationship which promised much but has turned sour; while the stalking title track tells of a relationship damaged by gossip and hearsay.

The instrumentation is so simple that the record sounds almost under-produced; but to clutter up the arrangements would have distracted the listener's attention from the nine musical stories, with their strong melodies, intelligent and vivid lyrics, and equally vivid guitar from the leader. In form, this is not a blues LP throughout, but it sure as hell is a blue one.

Mike Atherton



GLENN WILSON

Impasse
(Cadence CJR 1023)
Recorded: New York, 2 March/13 July 1984.
Beautiful Love; Impasse; Stablemates; Zippy's Blues; Satori; Sonny's Pal; Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love.
Wilson (bs); Harold Danko (p); Dennis Irwin (b); Adam Nussbaum (d).

GLENN SENT us his LP — a debut session as leader — with a very friendly letter, and although our copy was almost bent double in the mail and looks a little seashell on the turntable, it plays out a very agreeable set of bantone blowing. Wilson has paid dues in the reed sections of Rich, Hamp and Toshiko and the experience has given his horn a cumbersome, grandfatherly dignity of tone which suits a programme that's tough and vulnerable by turns. He claims Pepper Adams as a primary influence, but Cecil Payne is recalled more strongly in "Zippy's Blues", a weak variation made strong by

the soloing, and the mad elephant rush of "Stablemates", recomposed as a duet for baritone and drums.

This is a bright quartet, with Danko reliably inquisitive without getting much in Wilson's huge way. Instead of trying to make the baritone fleet in imitation of tenor or alto, the leader revels in its fuming low notes and slow lurches up the register. The compositions are a bit glum, although "Satori" is an unusually elusive ballad idea, and the closing theme is a Mingus piece shorn of its author's blowsy sentiment. But Glenn's music is straight from the heartland. We are steam-pressing our copy.

Richard Cook

COUNT BASIE

Live In Stockholm
(Magic AWE15)
Recorded: Stockholm, 23 February 1959.
Bag A Bones; Plymouth Rock; Blues In Frankie's Flat; The Dexson; Who, Me?; Five O'Clock In The Morning; Brushes And Brass; The Midgets.
Count Basie (p); Thad Jones, Joe Newman, Snooky Young, Wendell Culley (t); Henry Coker, Benny Powell, Al Grey (tbn); Frank Wess, Frank Foster, Billy Mitchell, Marshall Royal, Charlie Fowlkes (sax); Freddie Green (g); Eddie Jones (b); Sonny Payne (d).

ISSUED by the Count Basie Society, this concert recording came at the end of a decade in which Basie perfected the style and repertoire which was to keep the band on a sound business basis for the following twenty-odd years. Such a time-scale makes the 'legendary' band of the late 30s and early 40s seem almost like an abandoned pilot project. It's not surprising if you see Basie through an economic as well as musical perspective.

What is first striking is how like the Ellington band of the late 1940s this band could sound. "Bag A Bones" reflects very directly "Trumpet No End" (rather than Jay & Kay) while "Blues In Frankie's (Hoss') Flat" is not so far away from "Happy Go Lucky Local". There are other, more fleeting, echoes, but to say this is not to detract from the value of either band. Overall the soloists come off better than they seemed to do at the time, when they had to put up with unnecessary comparisons. The ensemble hits powerfully, though Sonny Payne at times telegraphs his punches.

All the material has been done elsewhere, however, so given the rather muddy sound quality this album may well appeal only to committed collectors of Basie minutiae.

Jack Cooke

ROBERT WATSON/ CURTIS LUNDY

Beatitudes
(New Note KM 11867)
Recorded: New York, 11 April 1983.
To See Her Face; Karita; Jewel; E.T.A.; Minority; Orange Blossom; Beatitudes.

**Robert Watson (as);
Mulgrew Miller (p); Curtis
Lundy (b); Kenny
Washington (d).**

MY COPY of the LP came replete with a selection of highly enthusiastic reviews from the US music press; so it seems that the reservations I will express about this latest example of Bobby Watson's work strike a note of dissent.

Beathludes consists of a collection of originals mostly by Robert Watson, with one by Curtis Lundy, plus Gigi Gryce's "Minority". There is a strong Jazz Messengers flavour to the album; Watson is, of course, a graduate of the Academy of Art, and Mulgrew Miller, the pianist, is a current student.

"To See Her Face" (which, with "E.T.A.", has in fact previously been recorded by the Messengers) is an attractive medium/up-tempo number, and the best track. "Kanta", a bossa nova, begins promisingly, but there is a bizarre lapse halfway through Watson's solo as Kenny Washington, normally a model of taste, starts striking out the third beat of the bar on the bass drum, somewhat detracting from the Latin feel. "Jewel" and "Orange Blossom" (the latter by Curtis Lundy) are two fairly ordinary ballads, while "E.T.A." is taken at a furious tempo and exhibits Watson's remarkable virtuosic control. The title-track is a medium-tempo number which goes on rather too long and ends with a symptomatic fade. "Minority", finally, is presented in an 'arrangement' by Curtis Lundy, the second and final 8's are played in triple time and succeeded by 'dramatic' pauses. The theme is an excellent one, however, and has no need of such irritating treatment.

These cavils aside, there is a more general cause for dissatisfaction which is harder to pin down. The compositions have, in most cases, a blandness about them which stems from a lack of any strong harmonic identity, and the improvisations of the main soloist are harmonically and melodically rather unadventurous. There is the curious and unfortunate trade-off between virtuosity and meretricious interest apparent also in the work of such as George Coleman, with whose approach that of Watson is in many ways comparable.

The balance is struck differently by more interesting players such as Watson's successor in the Jazz Messengers, Donald Harrison. Be that as it may, there is plenty in this album to appeal to Watson enthusiasts.

Andy Hamilton

**THE MICHEL
PETRUCCIANI TRIO**
*Live At The Village
Vanguard*
(Concord GW-3006)
Recorded: 16 March 1984,
New York City.
*Nardis; Oleo; Le Bricoleur
De Big Sur; To Erindia; Say
It Again And Again; Trouble;
Three Forgotten Magic
Words; Round About
Midnight.*
Michel Petruccianni (p); Palle
Danielsson (b); Eliot
Zigmund (d).

AFTER WYNTON Marsalis, Michel Petruccianni is one of the most important young musicians of the 80s. Just 23 in December

'85, his emergence as a piano virtuoso is remarkable, not just because it is unusual for a European player to make an impact on the American jazz scene, but because it has been achieved despite a formidable physical handicap. Discovered by Mike Zwerin, he remained in his native France until he was 18, and moved to the States where he was taken under the wing of Charles Lloyd, himself making a comeback in jazz. Recording for the Owl label, his work revealed a brilliant but unfocused talent, displaying a desire to reveal every facet of his technique on every number he played; an almost naive desire simultaneously to please and prove himself that resulted in aural indigestion.

With his first album for Concord, the solo *100 Hearts*, his playing became weighted down under the plethora of ideas he tried to cram into each number. *Live At The Village Vanguard*, however, recorded in 1984 with Palle Danielsson and Eliot Zigmund, was the best expose yet of his unique talent. Several long tracks are largely free of the claustrophobic compression of pianistic devices that simultaneously impressed and detracted from his earlier work. Throughout there is an urgency that suggests every number he plays may be his last, and this underlying tension is further heightened by moving through a series of climaxes he seldom chooses to resolve. Consequently, Petruccianni is an emotionally demanding player, driven by his creative prowess.

His playing is unafraid to draw upon contemporary influences, whether it be the Bill Evans-like romanticism that surfaces in "Nardis" and "To Erindia", the elliptical stream-of-consciousness of Keith Jarrett on "Say It Again" or percussive Bud Powell right hand runs that never pause for breath. "Oleo" is a tour de force in the stand-offish manner of a Lennie Tristano complex — it sounds like an extension of "Bud" from *Scene And Variations*. The difference here is that Tristano performed at the limit of his ability, while Petruccianni has bravura technique to spare which often compensates for his flamboyant eclecticism.

But he is his own man too, and can play apart from the basic pulse, which again heightens tension. His wholly individual way of coping, with dense, dissonant figures, often polyrhythmically opposes bass and drums. With his tendency to excess held in check by the superior and sympathetic Danielsson and Zigmund, it seems the trio is an ideal framework for the remarkable Michel Petruccianni to achieve maturity.

Stuart Nicholson

JOHN GRAAS
Jazzmantics
(Decca 25 2283-1)
Recorded: Los Angeles — 22
July 1957.
*Jazz Overture; Midnight
Sun; Petite Poème.*
Conte Candoli (t); Graas (fr
h); Red Callender (tu);
Buddy Collette (fl, cl, bs); Art
Pepper (as); Bob Cooper
(ts); Paul Moer (p); Red
Mitchell (b); Shelly Manne
(d).
Recorded: Los Angeles — 13
August 1957.
*Jazz Chorale; Id; Free And
Easy; Will Success Spoil
Rock 'n' Roll?*

**Buddy Clark (b) replaces
Mitchell.**
Recorded: Los Angeles — 24
September 1957.

*You And The Night And The
Music; Inch Worm; Flip-Tip;
Let's Fall In Love.*
Jack Sheldon (tp); Herb
Geller (as); Jack Montrose
(ts) replaces Candoli,
Pepper, Cooper.

THOUGH HE is long dead, Graas's remains, I think, the most convincing use of the French horn in jazz, and both his composing and arranging are still of constant interest.

According to some interpretations, the entire West Coast school was little more than a bowdlerization of Miles Davis's initiatives in his *Birth Of The Cool* Capitol recordings. In fact, and the use of French horn and tuba notwithstanding, the writing here, mainly though not exclusively by Graas, is quite different. It is also exhilarating in its sense of adventure, its deft use of a wide variety of resources, and in the superb performances it receives. Add to this a series of brief yet meaningfully concentrated solos by Pepper, Geller and others close to the top of their form, in some improvisations a response to the challenges of the writing is explicit, for example to the unusual harmony of Moer's "Poème".

Like "You And The Night And The Music", "Midnight Sun" is taken at a bright tempo that makes an agreeable change from the usual drooping treatments. The scoring here is highly effective, chiefly in block chords but with some contrapuntal movement within this and the melody latterly somewhat altered (improved). Also striking is "Flip-Tip", where Graas switches the ensemble lead every four bars, from horn to alto to trumpet, etc., with a tuba counter melody underneath. The tuba parts are telling throughout, as is Callender's execution of them.

Notable also are the interlude and coda of "Id", which Graas bases not on a chord sequence but on a scale over a pedal point. Obviously he neglected to read the history books, otherwise he would have known that this sort of thing was not done in jazz until two years later (Miles Davis: *Kind Of Blue*, 1959). In fact it perhaps is rather tactless to draw attention to this record at all. Who is likely to approve of the "Overture", for instance, which belongs to a jazz opera that Graas did not live to finish, even if it does contain a long sequence of fine solos? One of these is by Candoli, who once more suggests that some of us have been underestimating him for a long time. Certainly Sheldon impresses much less on "Let's Fall In Love". It should be added that the rock piece is a witty caricature and that "Free And Easy" was never issued until now.

Max Harrison

**BUDD JOHNSON &
PHIL WOODS**
*The Ole Dude & The
Fundance Kid*
(Uptown UP27.19)
Recorded: 4 February 1984,
Englewood Cliffs, N.J.
*After Five; Street Of Dreams;
Confusion; Blue Lou; More
Than You Know; Ole Dude
And The Fundance Kid.*
Budd Johnson (ts); Phil
Woods (as); Richard
Wyands (p); George
Duvivier (b); Bill Goodwin (d).

C H E C K

WHILE THIS is not an indispensable record, it is nevertheless an interesting one. On the face of it an incongruous partnership, it's one that works well, with the same balance of co-operation and competition that made the Al Cohn-Zoot Sims twosome such a memorable pocket of resistance against the rising tide of avant-garde in the 60s. The jaunty dialogue between Johnson and Woods can only be described as bop-mainstream and is underspiced by a good, straight-ahead rhythm section.

Woods makes no concessions to the Old Dude, who never suggested that age had impaired his playing, despite this being his last recording session before his death in October 1984. Johnson possessed a rugged, wholesome tone in the Hawkins-Webster lineage, but was much less maddening than either. Consequently, his less stylized approach has stood the test of time well and on the two ballads "Street Of Dreams" and "More Than You Know" it is his contribution, rather than that of Woods, that catches the ear. Elsewhere, Woods gives Johnson a good run for his money, and their exchanges on the uptempo numbers "After Five" and "Blue Lou" illustrate how Johnson never let the evolution of jazz outdistance him.

"Confusion", a Johnson original, is the most interesting piece of the session and is a reminder that in the 40s he was better known for his skills as a writer and arranger than as a player, contributing to the books of Boyd Raeburn, Woody Herman and Gene Krupa among others. The one drawback throughout, unfortunately, is the bad mix of the rhythm section which gives prominence to Bill Goodwin's drums over George Duvivier's bass. Such a lapse is unforgivable for a session recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's, but perhaps not a surprise as on close examination the set has been produced by Messrs Sunenblick and Feldman – both physicians. Now, any recording engineer fancy a spot of amateur brain surgery?

Stuart Nicholson

THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

At The Cafe Bohemia
Volume 1

(Blue Note BLP 1507)
Recorded: Cafe Bohemia,
New York 1955.
*Soft Winds, The Theme;
Minor's Holiday; Alone
Together; Prince Albert.
Kenny Dorham (t); Hank
Mobley (ts); Horace Silver
(p); Doug Watkins (b); Art
Blakey (d).*

ONE WISHES that this version of The Messengers had made more records. There's a sense on this date of style on the point of gelling, in its most dangerous phase, and that such unusual temperaments as those of Dorham and Mobley were involved makes it the more intriguing. Add to that the tug between Silver's cackling piano and Blakey's drums at its most impishly volatile, and you understand why several long-term Messengers followers rate these Cafe Bohemia sides as their favourites.

The key figure here is Dorham. His early problems with bop tempos are triumphantly obliterated by the cavalier phrasing he fires off in "The Theme" and

"Minor's Holiday", but his tone is soft fire – this is how he will always be perceived, the shadowy figure between Davis and Gillespie. Unlike a hard, domineering trumpeter like Clifford Brown, Dorham plays for the band – he seems in, and you never hear Blakey having to burn his tail.

Next to this, Mobley sounds like an apprentice. He hadn't found a style to suit his hesitations in 1955, and his feature on "Alone Together" (which Hank himself shyly introduces) is ordinary.

THE JAZZ MESSENGERS



Somewhere in between, Horace Silver plays his unique self. When he breaks into a solo, we hear mocking fillets of funk – he can sound as distracted and perverse as Monk, although you can sense Horace's grin in constant attendance. His outing in "Soft Winds", shifting faultlessly into double tempo, prefigures everything that Bobby Timmons would chew up five years hence. What a great band this was!

Richard Cook

FRED VAN HOVE

KKWTT
(Nato 355)

Recorded: King Kong,
Antwerp – 17 June 1984;
and La Butte aux Oiles – 18
June 1984.
A1 & 4; A5 & 8; B; C1 & 3;
C4; C5.
Arthur Van Der Hoeft (alto-
horn, t); Leo Verheyen (tb);
Wim Becu (tb); Hubert
Sleymer (euph, tb); Jozef
Matthessen (tuba); Fred Van
Hove (p).

RADU Malfatti & QUATUOR AVANT

Formu
(Nato 175)

Recorded: Dresden – 3 May
1983.
*Funf Leichte Stucke; Seven;
Form A; Form B; Form C;
Formidable.
Radu Malfatti (tb); Johannes
Bauer (t); Dietmar Diesner
(ss, clt); Heiner Reinhardt
(ss, bs-clt).*

IN the beginning it was like business and pleasure – free improvisation and composition were things not to be mixed. Nowadays, though, contemporary music struggles within different camps over the possibilities of marrying the two – or at least playing one off against the other. Anthony Braxton's endeavours here are

possibly made more radical by their American context; in Europe, though, contemporary classics and improvised music are more likely bedfellows. And yet neither are the Europeans at one with the connection – as these two records admirably demonstrate.

Pianist Van Hove's KKWTT scores the five-piece brass ensemble right down to the last semi-quaver, leaving Van Hove free either to harmonize with it, or reject it. The brass are first to project, melting in and out of dissonant figures and sometimes pondering to excess ("A8"). Van Hove responds, at first exploring subtle nuances at the keys, and later under the lid, reaching a creative peak with the crystal tears of "B". On the second side, the contradictions open out. Van Hove, by now more energetic, responds with roller-coasting hard bop phrases and more conventional colours, rounding the corner into a sketch reminiscent of the old piano soundtracks sometimes accompanying comedy classics of the silent movie era. Tricky, but compulsive.

Malfatti, meanwhile, shreds the components more finely. Compositional frames of sharp diagonals and criss-crossing lines explode into showers of purling and spitting, moving quickly between the structured and the spontaneous. But with its assemblage of twin saxes and trombones, it's forced to work a narrow tonal seam. It's best compared with modern chamber music, albeit a more flighty and consistent whole.

David Ilic

JAN GARBAREK

It's OK To Listen To The
Gray Voice
(ECM 1294)

Recorded: Oslo, December
1984.
*White Noise Of
Forgetfulness; The Crossing
Place; One Day In March I
Go Down To The Sea And
Listen; Mission; To Be
Where I Am; It's OK To
Phone The Island That Is A
Mirage; It's OK To Listen To
The Gray Voice; I'm The
Knife-thrower's Partner.
Jan Garbarek (ts, ss); David
Torn (gtr, gtr synth);
Eberhard Weber (b); Michael
DiPasqua (d, perc).*

THE SOFT light that appears to bathe so much ECM music with a cool mistiness, far from being a point of style, has become a point of substance. In addition to giving birth to a whole species of joke (BMW, Bang & Olufsen and Braathurst), that lambency has descended like a fog over a marginal sub-continent of the improving world and introduced a new quality to its culture: the literary.

Jan Garbarek is poet laureate of that nation and it's OK To Listen To The Gray Voice could be an archetype. Using lines from the poems of one Thomas Transtromer as titles for the seven "pieces" that constitute the album (and presumably as its inspiration), Garbarek and co. seamlessly weld composition to wordless improvisation and, in so doing, end up with a music that is merely representative. It is music that speaks only of the object of reference – at least to these ears that relish the non-specific

subjectivity of jazz, a language that speaks only in terms of itself and whose meaning is locked into its own form.

So, adjust your frost-black anglophone for maximum ambient effect and watch the adjectives pour from the speakers like holiday snaps; posed, badly focused and full of breath-taking views. Even the epic melody of "Mission: To Be Where I Am", magnificently hewn out by Garbarek's lovely tone and the super-tasty guitar of David Torn, sounds like an expensively-bound novel. And a classic one, too.

Garbarek is a superb saxophonist with startling control, it seems a pity that it should all be used so cosmetically. It's a consequence of the kind of creative conception that privileges Aesthetic Effect over Artistic Substance that this music rings so hollow, and it's because this music is so self-consciously about something outside the limitless bounds of the language of saxophone, guitar, bass and drum that it ends up being about nothing at all.

Nick Coleman

HILTON RUIZ

Cross Currents (Stash ST248)
Recorded: New York, November 1984.
Stolen Moments; My Little Suede Shoes; Time; Confirmation; If I Were A Bell; There Is No Greater Love; A Night In Tunisia; Take The A Train.
Hilton Ruiz (kybds); **Major Holley** (b); **Ed Blackwell** (d); **Ray Barreto** (congas); **Steve Berrios** (perc).

THIS COULD have been a good album. Hilton Ruiz seemed to be one of the most exciting of the younger jazz pianists, evidenced by the storm he raised when over here two years ago with the Freddie Hubbard Quintet, in which context he produced solo work of great power and audacity. And the choice of material on this, his first album as leader for an American label, is a good one. "Stolen Moments" in particular is an under-used and beautiful theme.

Unfortunately, tastelessness is featured on almost every track, sometimes putting in an appearance in an especially nasty, unmitigated form. The idea seems to have been to provide 'latin enrichments' of the material (congas, shakers and other "seasoning") plus other excrescences (fancy electric keyboards as well as piano) in an effort (in the words of Francis Davis resplendent) to produce "something pristine, novel and beguiling". Well, variety may be the spice of life (though I have my doubts) but not in the form of this ill-thought out, inconsequential clutter. For instance, "There Is No Greater Love" (a particularly offensive track) features, in addition to the leader's piano, a bit of jangling from some other electric keyboard, has "Tico, Tico" as a coda (an attractive theme but couldn't we have had a separate account?), and ends with a symptomatic fade. "If I Were A Bell" naturally has to commence with Ed Blackwell operating a Chinese opera gong – well, it might have been called "If I Were A Gong", mightn't it? The ubiquitous congas pop acceptably on "Stolen Moments" (a pleasant track, as is the version of Richie Powell's "Time") but do we really need them on "Take

The A Train"? And as for "A Night In Tunisia" – urgh!!! By this time I can join with Macbeth in declaring "I have supped full with horrors" (Strewth!) – Ed

What's this, the crotchety reviewer syndrome again? Well, as Charles Fox has pointed out, "the notion of bad taste is not a bourgeois shibboleth but an aesthetic reality" (The Essential Jazz Records Vol. 1, p. 326). It is possible that the heavy hand of the producer might be responsible, but I feel that even were this removed, the album still would not convince. For Ruiz is putting little effort into his solos, which are almost uniformly glo. Is he engaged with, does he really care about his material? Or is he just another soulless virtuoso? It is no pleasure to raise these doubts about a musician for whom one has had a high regard, but this LP unfortunately does prompt them.

Andy Hamilton

LEROY JENKINS' STING

Urban Blues (Black Saint BSR 0083)
Recorded: Sweet Basil, New York City – 2 January 1984.
Static In The Attic; Looking For The Blues; Come On Home, Baby; Why Can't I Fly; O.W. Frederick; No Banks River; Through The Ages; Jehovah; LeRoy Jenkins (vln); **Terry Jenoure** (vln, vcels); **James Emery** (g); **Alonzo Gardner** (b); **Kamal Schir** (d).

LEROY JENKINS hits town in party mood with an LP of quirky, stomping blues. Sting are electric, vivacious, danceable, partly inspired by Ornette's Prime Time, partly by the Black popular tradition of blues, soul, R&B. Adding further to the fun are Jenkins' dramatic compositional sense (skipping tunes collide with block-busting chords and vanish into abrupt crescendos), some fiery improvising, and Terry Jenoure's plaintive, off-hand singing.

If the effect is sometimes of a higgledy-piggledy patchwork, all skittish solos and sudden, slandering ensemble outbursts, its gung-ho air is very appealing. The band certainly have a ball, and the whole is infused with a love of the blues – its ancient spirit conjured here in a fresh, high-voltage format that still manages to evoke a multiplicity of moods and feelings.

"Looking For The Blues" is the LP's centrepiece, a series of inspired solos over a lovely, swinging blues tune, but "Why Can't I Fly", with its accelerations into swagger, and the swooning jubilation of "No Banks River" come close behind. Jenkins' careering tangle of strings proves marvellously versatile, a slipping, sliding pulse of antic energy, yet remains capable of instantaneous realignment into a cat's cradle of riff and rhythm.

Urban Blues is a very contemporary, very idiosyncratic, celebration of the Black musical tradition. Mr Jenkins really knows how to paint the town blue.

Graham Lock

PETER BROTZMANN 12 Love Poems (FMP 1060)

Recorded: Berlin – 21, 21, 23 August 1984.

Nr 1 – Lonely Woman; Nr 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Peter Brotzmann (as, ts, bs, tenor mouthpiece, e-flat & a clts, tarogato).

TIM HODGKINSON

Spitter (Woof 010)
Recorded: London Musicians' Collective – October 1979; Cold Storage London – 21 & 28 April 1985.
Tootle With Air-Gaps; Slow Web Lull; Cutting With Nemo; Nose-Juggling; Sewer-Gas; Quill Jerk Mimic; Walk/Don't Walk; A Limpet In Marshallsea; Dogs Of The Absent Farmer; Night-Bells; (mounting spirit in his) Bone-house.
Tim Hodgkinson (clt, as, bs, org, g, film-cans, chains, various gizmos incl distortion unit, ring-modulator).

SOLO IMPROVISING – some call it a lonely occupation; others, a conceptual misnomer. But the fact remains that most improvisers have tried the lone game at some point in their musical lives. 14 Love Poems isn't Brotzmann's first one-man vinyl show, although with its virginal freshness you'd hardly have known. Few recordings have come quite as close to tapping the nerve centre of Germany's veteran free jazz warhorse, and as one who had felt a creeping inevitability in Brotzmann's recent vinyl output, it's a welcomingly essential chapter. A stately reading of Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman" sets the tone for much of what follows (in fact, mutations of the theme seem to crop up in several other of the 14 tracks): breathy excursions through the tubular byways of soprano and baritone saxes, clarinet and bass clarinet, turning to cries of triumph or pain. There's plenty of Brotzmann's agile, throaty roar and caustic flavour strung over the two sides; but it's in his more pensive moments where the music hits hardest – sounds hanging in the air, humming like the rush of bullroarers.

Hodgkinson's Spitter on the other hand, makes public what had for years seemed little more than a private indulgence. Sticking mainly to clarinet and alto sax (side two finds him utilizing various electric gizmos) he combines a similarly abrasive turn of phrase with more cutting contrasts. Several of side one's all-acoustic settings develop into call-and-response figures, where Hodgkinson chops the sounds as finely as vegetables in a Chinese stir-fry: indeed, there's much of the quick-fire continuity of John Zorn about his playing, although without that same sense of polish and humour. More from the head, perhaps, than the heart, but Spitter is a far cry from the itinerant honking and squeaking of many a lesser disciplinarian. Both highly recommended.

David Ilic

COLEMAN HAWKINS SEXTET Desafinado (Impulse AS-28)

C C H H E E C C K K

Recorded: 12 & 17
September 1962.

Desafinado; I'm Looking
Over A Four Leafed Clover;
Samba Para Bean; I
Remember You; One Note
Samba; O Pato; Un Abraco
No Bonfa Gilberto; Stumpy
Bossanova.
Hawkins (ts); Barry
Galbraith, Howard Collins
(g); Major Holley (b); Tommy
Flanagan, Eddie Locke,
Willie Rodriguez (perc).

FEW MUSICS, except perhaps country, have suffered so much indignity through being covered and adapted as bossa novas. From their late 50s birthdays spent rupturing the calm of Rio's samba clubs, they have regressed to ignominious cocktail bar and hotel lift music worldwide, hummable and forgettable. The song that started it all—"Desafinado" means "out of tune" in Portuguese—an apt prediction of the critical reactions anticipated by Joao Gilberto. By 1962, though, every new tune had to be bossa-fied, and American jazz musicians queued to play these familiar shuffling rhythms and mellow minor chords. Coleman Hawkins' turn came in 1962. As this album reveals, he did bring some zing back into the thing.

In this mix of adapted classics ("I Remember You", "I'm Looking Over A Four-Leafed Clover") and bossa/samba standards ("O Pato", "Desafinado", "One Note Samba") and a couple of purposely written Hawkins specials by Manny Albam, Coleman extracts some of the sweetness that led to the downfall of the genre. From the sultry heat haze surrounding Hawkins' first thick honeyed tones on "Desafinado", the languor is guaranteed, but Hawkins' tenor is no soft-tongued creature as often employed to pretty (ie bland) the style. It's always only a matter of bars before he soars clear of the over-familiar melodies and into the preferred clean air of his imaginings. "Un Abraco No Bonfa Gilberto"—a long epic poem—gives him the most leisurely chance to desert Barry Galbraith's weave of crisp chords, and Hawk's solo on this track is the highpoint of the album. It's a relief to hear his sturdy tone, especially against Getz's definitive but sometimes soporific versions of the same songs (collected on a recent box set, see *Wire* 19) though Hawk still knows how to coax the delicate tones too. "Samba Para Bean" (Bean=Hawk) proves how softly he can handle it—like a very large man with nimble dancing feet.

It's good to hear some of the original bite in the music, which Gilberto Gil recently recalled as "that weird pulse, that amazing beat, those strange words... which upturned our lives in 1960". Those strange words are absent from this record, but Coleman Hawkins' Sextet manage to recall the bossa nova from the slumbers enforced on it by other version-merchants.

Sue Steward

CLIFFORD JORDAN QUINTET

Two Tenor Winner
(Criss Cross Jazz 1011)
Recorded: *Monster*, 1
October 1984.
Half And Half; *Song Of Her*;
Groovin' High; *The Water
Bearer*; *Make The Man Love*

Me; *Two Tenor Winner*;
Doug's Prelude.
Jordan, Junior Cook (ts);
Kirk Lightsey (p); Cecil
McBee (b); Eddie Gladden
(d).

FRANK FOSTER & FRANK WESS

Frankly Speaking
(Concord CJ 276)
Recorded: New York,
December 1984.
An' All Such Stuff As 'Dat;
The Summer Knows; *When
Did You Leave Heaven?*; *Up
And Coming*; *One Morning
In May*; *Two Franks*; *This Is
All I Ask*; *Blues Backstage*.
Foster (ts, ss); Wess (ts, f);
Kenny Barron (p); Rufus
Reid (b); Marvin 'Smitty'
Smith (d).



IN A way, Lockjaw and Griffin have got a bit to answer for after all those two-tenor punch-up records. Now every time a double-header on the horn comes up we expect unmitigated slugging to be the order of the day. So the Jordan-Cook LP comes as an attractive surprise. Both tenormen play with a mottled tone, both phrase rather shakily at times, and it adds up to a humane blowing date that's a good deal gentler than I imagined. When they do pull off the gloves and attack the tempos, as on "The Water Bearer", it doesn't work so well, the playing padded up with familiarities. Much better is "Half And Half", the melody played in counterpoint, with the time rilled by Jordan and more cautiously dismantled by Cook. They have a ballad apiece, and Jordan's work on "Song Of Her" is superior. "Groovin' High" is taken at a sensible tempo and the inevitable chase chorus is quite polite.

Frankly Speaking was contrived to be much more exciting, but there's something empty about the music. Although Basileites Foster and Wess are stylistically well at home in the shouting bag, and things like "Two Franks" boil water as they're intended, it's all rather professionally powerful. Some of the attempts at inventive arranging turn out to be no more than cute, like the inappropriate clip-clop pace chosen for "The Summer Knows", and though Foster usually has some appealingly rowdy remarks to make it's not hard enough to turn the listener around. Not that the cold shine of Concord's studio sound helps much—the intimacy engineered on the Criss Cross date is entirely missing here. And Jordan and Cook have a better rhythm section too.

Richard Cook



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BOOKS

■ UNFINISHED DREAM: THE MUSICAL WORLD OF RED CALLENDER Red Callender & Elaine Cohen (Quartet £13.95)

AFTER a life playing bass with everyone from Louis Armstrong to James Newton, via Lucky Thompson, Erroll Garner, Art Tatum, the Young brothers and countless minor dates (including, not so minor, Mingus' early bass lessons), Callender has surprisingly little to say about music itself. He regards it as a craft with learnable skills, proprieties, etiquette: and the book moves easily and speedily through his long career as indispensable sideman, with a confusing profusion of anecdotes that begin by seeming faintly eccentric in style and presentation, and develops readably, winningly, into the full sweep of an enjoyed life and a justified pride in collective achievement: the recognition of jazz as a serious music.

Perhaps there's a mildly defensive attitude to the wild and dangerous sides of jazz in myth and history: the eruptions in the fifties, sixties, and seventies, that loom so large in our own picture of the way it went, barely get a mention in this account, Callender being just too immersed in the

daily practice of music – too busy, as he puts it, "learning to be a musician". Which you can't begin to be before the age of 35, he concludes, citing Charlie Parker among others as a dreadful example of what can happen to those too obsessive in their pursuit of sound and visions, those who move too fast through the fear and the rapture. If this wasn't such an amiable read, we might want to quote, at the faintly,

fogey wisdom, the early advice he was given: "Any low note is a good note, any low note is bass." Not so far from the point his craft has reached, full circle, whatever, for all the vast subtlety of the journey between.

But the journey couldn't have been made without Callender and those like him. There aren't many: they get fewer.

Mark Sinker



A bit of the Callender history

1. Ran Blake, Camden on Camera, Eno Dolphy, Steve Lacy, Harold Land, Leo Records; Wynton Marsalis; Art Pepper tribute, Max Roach; Scatting & Bopping, Seven Steps to Jazz – Trumpet, John Stevens Part I: Women Love

8. Cadillac Records; Coltrane's A Love Supreme, Count Basie tribute, Ted Curson; Miles Davis concert, Festivals – Moers and Le Mans, Barry Guy, Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Metalanguage, Michel Petrucci; Seven Steps – Bass

9. Art Ensemble of Chicago, Benny Carter, Charly R&B; Andrew Cyrille, Manu Dibango, Teo Macero; Meredith Monk; Paul Murphy; Oliver Nelson's The Blues and the Abstract Truth, Recording Improvised Music, Trevor Watts Monk Music: Where Were You in '62?

10. Alterations, Armstrong's West End Blues, Aron Barkai, Black Masks, White Masks, Art Blakey; Bobolomagus, Jazz At The Phil releases, Hugh Masekela; Thelonious Monk, Jerry Wester

12. Afro Jazz; Laurie Anderson, Gone – But Not Forgotten – Vic Dickenson, Dennis Ross, Collin Walcott; Chris McGregor, Phil Minton-Roger Turner, New Year's Honours List; New York Ear & Eye – Gospel, Ma Rainey, Cecil Taylor; Max Roach's We Insist! Freedom Now Suite

BACK ISSUES

14. Arts Council, Harry Beckett; British Summer Time Ends; Kenny Clarke tribute, Graham Collier; Free Music Overview; Hip London Scene; Incus Festival, Jazz Funding, London Venues; Evan Parker's Saxophonist Soles, Round The Regions; John Surman, Mike Westbrook, Where Guide – Manchester, Annie Whitehead

15. Derek Bailey, Martha & Fontella Bass; George Benson; Essential Coltrane; Charles Mingus – Pithcanthropus Erectus; Pat Metheny – Jim Mullen, Norma Winstone

16. Anthony Braxton; Cotton Club, Peter King; Onyeka; Essential Dolphy, Incus Festival, Zoot Sims; Gf Scott-Heron; Clifford Brown & Max Roach

17. Ray Charles, John Gilmore, Herbie Nichols, Daniel Ponce, Jazz in Paris, Betty Boop; Palatin; Afro Jazz

18. Sonny Rollins, Bobby McFerrin, Jayne Cortez, Stanley Jordan, Tommy Chase, Bertrand Tavernier, Joe Farrell (great issue)

19. Ornette Coleman; Charlie Haden, Steve Lacy, Boyd Rice; Slim Gaillard; Movie Jazz, Peter Ind; Urban Six

20. Art Blakey, Wynton & Branford Marsalis, Bobby Watson; Hank Mobley, Ganelin Trio, Bob Beldenbecke, Impulse & Blue Note reissues

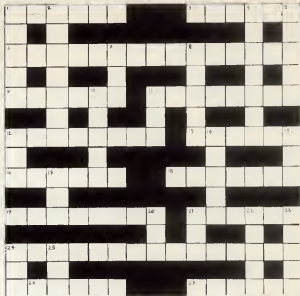
21. Chet Baker, Cubas; Jamaaladeen Tacuma, Michael Nyman; Duke Ellington; Pirelli Zoo, Man Wilson

22. John Coltrane; Ruben Blades; Nathan Davis, James Blue Ulmer, Depravity, Guest Stars

PLEASE NOTE ISSUES 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 & 12 OUT OF PRINT.

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- 1 and 3 Decline the verb "to swing", make
- 2 a Connection . . . and you should have
- 3 him. (6,6)
- 4 "Probe Beaks' phone!" Order that and
- 5 you will get Mr. Goodman's unlikely
- 6 recorded message. (5,6,4)
- 7 and 18 Burning Lips? (4,2,3,4)
- 8 11 Per dent? Could be disorientated Bass!
- 9 (5,3)
- 10 Familiar, crusty, terse demand from
- 11 band after gig! (5,3)
- 12 What Ornette is to mouldy fygges . . . no
- 13 Dely, for sure! (3,3)
- 14 Dreaded situation at finish of musical
- 15 performance . . . in another context,
- 16 tho', sheer relief, perhaps? (2,4)
- 17 see 9 across.
- 18 Vocal fellow with frog in his throat? (3,5)
- 19 Seemingly a dealer in fabrics, this low-
- 20 down chap certainly bolstered Max
- 21 some years ago. (6)
- 22 "R. L. Husky has a wart!" Shame! New
- 23 arrangement changes all that and
- 24 produces clarinet Art, according to
- 25 Momma. (6,9)
- 26 See 24 down.
- 27 Alton G. did it . . . Syd does it. It's
- 28 standard. It's American. Some Boy
- 29 Scouts even make it up! (6)



- 1 Body Odour initially follows a little
prick! Could that possibly make a
trumpet-player? (5)
- 2 Firstly, you might think it's Calloway,
secondly, Danny or Davy, maybe.
Wrong! It's West Indian pianist, ...
seemingly gone Dutch these days. (3,4)
- 4 When the sun go down? (7)
- 5 "Blue Skies" hides behind Duca! top
bars unlimited ... only the unbounded
bit required. (2,3)
- 7 Definitely not the daughter of this
House! (3)
- 8 The Dean of Ninnessee. (5)
- 10 Navigation secondary here; you
discover where the Company's ink
supplies come from. (5)
- 11 Arcadian blower! (3)
- 12 To his intimates ... Frog; to Michael
Jackson ... a Bat! (3)

- 14 Half of Eric is at end of new route . . . the
rest is "a Lunch", maybe? Altogether,
it's the furthest limit. (5)
- 15 Dirty Old Man? Surely not Cerulli!
Initially perhaps. (3)
- 16 Guitar Collins . . . often on high-flying-
sounding label. (3)
- 20 Aurally, what many a unschooled
jazzman depends on. (3)
- 21 A real tonic! (3)
- 22 Post Office Servant stands over Queen!
Correctly, you'll see at least one at every
gig. (5)
- 23 Williams and Fairweather? In
combination, decidedly regal. (5)
- 24 and 26 across Varsity Boat Race Crews?
Well . . . yes . . . but meant Miles'
version, of. (3, 5)
- 25 You'll have to top Madge to get near
Red's recent partner! (3)

ACROSS: 1 Robert, 3 Jazzbo; 6 Push It Up The Bore, 9 See 23; 11 Past; 13 Ash; 14 Ow; 15 Hol[ly]day; 16 Nord (Deutsche Rundfunk); 17 Mama (Don't Allow); 19 Sparrow s, 21 See 4 down; 22 Yes; 23 & 9 Stan Tracey, 24 Asphy; 25 Up 'Gainst The Wall, 27 Harlan; 28 See 16 down

DOWN: 1 Rap[par]; 2 Topsy; 3 Johnson; 4 & 21 Zoot And Al; 5 Open Horns; 7 Stal; 8 Nappy; 10 Enigmas; 12 Two Bros; 15 Honey Hush; 17 My Sugar, 18 Alto Non-Parlel; 19 Sonet, 20 Opera; 24 A Ship (Without A Sail); 26 I.



THE WRITE PLACE

LAND OF PLENTY

I DO not disagree with Brian Morton's appraisal of Bobby Hutcherson's *Tota/Eclipse*, but I cannot accept his one-line dismissal of Harold Land's distinctiveness as a tenor saxophonist. Snappy, seemingly definitive statements such as this do their victims a great disservice. Whilst Land modified his original style to accommodate himself within Hutcherson's group, of which he was co-leader, leaning heavily under the prevailing influence of Coltrane, the sound and style he had developed and refined between his tenure with the Max Roach/Clifford Brown Unit, through the Curtis Cane group to its full flowering in *The Fox and West Coast Blues* is thoroughly distinctive. I'm not claiming that he is one of the great originals, but a readily recognizable individual stylist. It is such musicians who develop their individuality within a current style of playing that keeps jazz so interesting. Whilst Parker, Gordon, Rollins, Coltrane, Dolphy, Coleman and Aylor provide the landmarks of modern jazz saxophone, there are all these others in between who go to make up the landscape. More credit to the middleman!

Roger Gow, St Neots

RUBEN: THE FIRST LP

I WAS really delighted to read Sue Steward's article about Ruben Blades in *Wire* (issue 22), but I must point out one omission she made that contradicts some of her assertions about Ruben's recording career.

In fact, he made an album of his own material earlier than his collaboration with Willie Colon. It was called *De Panama A New York* (Allegre LPA-885/SLPA-885D). I would guess that the album was recorded

in about 1969-70 (no date is given on sleeve or record). It was recorded in New York and Ruben was accompanied by the orchestra of Pete Rodriguez - who had the big Latin bugalu hit "I Like It Like That" in 1966. Ruben wrote nine of the ten songs on the album.

She also states that Ruben hasn't sung in English since 1964. Actually, one of the songs on *De Panama* is in English, as is the track "What Happened" on the 1982 album *The Last Fight*.

Keep up the Latin and Salsa coverage!
John Child, Wood Green N22

ANDREW!

I WOULD like over the next year to see an article about Andrew Hill, who is unjustly neglected while the likes of Cecil Taylor get lots of attention. It would seem that those who shout loudest get the most attention, and Hill doesn't shout at all.

Derek O'Driscoll
Fear not Derek! Andrew is a long-standing hero favourite at *Wire* and will shortly be the subject of a major retrospective - RC.

THE OLD MASTERS (SIC)

TREMENDOUS to see Jack Cooke's name under a review again. With Brian Priestley and Max Harrison, you have almost reconstituted the best of the review team for the late lamented *Jazz Monthly* - which for my money carried the best writing about the music we have seen in this country.

Frank Phillips, Reading.
Well, yes - at their best these old chaps would sometimes bring JM close to the standards of *Wire* - upstart RC.

DEFINITELY THE LAST WORD(S)

IN REFERENCE to the letter by reader Mark Dorber criticising the Tommy Chace Quartet. If Tommy is so far removed from Blakey technically, why do established critics (the very same people who write for *Wire* and other musical papers) constantly draw a comparison? Take page 14 of *Wire*'s November issue - review of the Brecon festival.

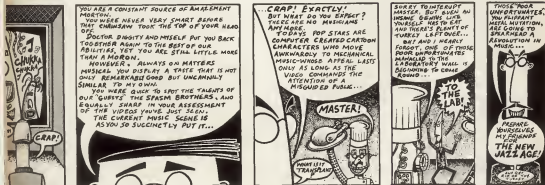
The simile is not Tommy's fault but the writer's.

Shaun Price, Surrey

I'M TIRED of seeing so much criticism by comparison in your magazine. It's an all too easy shorthand that everyone seems to accept and use. Sometimes I wish venues would just advertise music - no names, reputations or tight-arised little scenes. Maybe then people would listen more with their ears rather than their prejudices.

I don't want to continue a debate through your pages or anything else that distracts from the music, but I'll just say this - I've seen the Tommy Chace Quartet several times live and heard their albums. I think they are a great band and to say they can't play or want/need to play like anyone else is indefensible it's so wide of the mark. That kind of thinking is why the English Jazz Scene is as wimpy and uncreative as it is. There are some good things happening in music and Tommy Chace is one of them. The quality of his work should be an inspiration to all musicians.

Dave Murphy, NWS
OK, OK, enough - Tom's alright, alright? This correspondence is now closed - RC.



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